This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

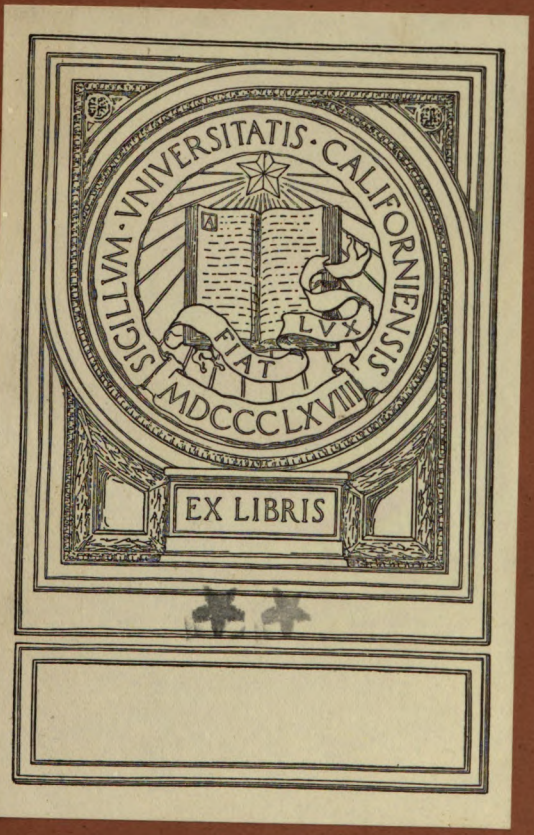
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Rush C. Hawkins

No.

Digitized by Google

40 B
59



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

MIRROR OF TASTE

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi.

VOLUME III.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY THOMAS BARTON ZANTZINGER AND CO.
Fry and Kammerer, Printers.
1811.

Digitized by Google

908c
M67
v.3

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

INDEX.

ANECDOTES—of page
Earl Ormond - - 112
A lawyer - - - 112
Diogenes - - - 165
Garrick and Johnson - 172
Curious hoax - - 172
John of Portugal - 173
Dr. Henniker and Chatham 174
A book found in a fish - 175
Irish Nell - - 176
Francis I. - - 176
Parental dignity - 174
West, the painter - - 301
Garrick - - - 383
Americans, an opera, critique on 373
BIOGRAPHY—of
Cooke - - - 16
Quick - - - 26
Warren - 73, 140, 213, 274
Davy, composer - 157
Elliston, actor - - 222
Quin, actor - 284, 350
Mattocks, Mrs. - - 339
Beaumont, Mrs. in Euphrasia 50
Madam Clermont - 51
Maria, in the Citizen - 51
Blunders, literary - - 111
Bulls, familiar to the ancients 297
Boscawen, Mr. his death 375
CENSOR 46, 113, 178, 245, 306, 384
Criminal prosecutions - 110
Calbraith, in Zanga - - 113
Pierre - 117
Cock fighting - - 172
Cooke, life of - - 16
Compared with Kemble 234
his first appearance in Philad.
in Richard III. - 180
in Sir Pertinax - 245
in Shylock - 254, 306
in Lear - - 384
Chronology confounded 302
Comparisons - - - 365
Cumberland, Mr. his death 375
Chapman, Doctor, his Select Speeches - - 379
DOUBTFUL SON, a comedy, noticed - - - 52
De Monfort, a tragedy, analyzed 57, 120
Drama, its influence on the mind 154
Davy, the composer, his life 157
Dennison, in Gustavus Vasa 178
ESSAYS, on Massinger's writings - - - - 31
Simon Shadow - - 152
Power of Conscience - 164
The Law and the Drama 228
The rights of the brute creation 239
On passion, and its effects - 300
English, character of, by a Stranger - - - - 234
English women, compared to French - - - 299
FOOTE, character of - 44
Female heroism - - 109
French women, compared with English - - 299
GRECIAN Daughter, acted 46
Geese, interview between 164
Gustavus Adolphus, his magnanimity - - - 175
Gustavus Vasa, tragedy of, performed - - - - 178
Gazette Extraordinary, a new play, critique on - 363
Garrick, anecdote of - - 383
JOHN, king of Portugal, great strength of - - 173
KNIGHT of Snowdown, a new musical drama - 261
LESLIE, a prodigy in the art of drawing - - 263
MASSINGER, essay on his writings - - 31, 94
Music, effect of on animals 102
Merchant of Venice analysed 254, 306
Mattocks, Mrs. her life - 339
——— verses on - - 343
NELSON, ld. inscription on his monument by R. B. Sheridan 366
Novels, and the reading of them 86

Digitized by Google

INDEX.

OWENS, the Irish tragedian, some account of - 101
Ourselves, a play, critique on 367
PORTRAITS—of
Master Payne, opposite to page 1
Mr. Warren - - 65
Mrs. Wood - 131
Mr. Cooke - - - 201
in Richard III. 245
in Sir Pertinax 265
Passion, observations on - 367
POETRY.
Rural felicity - - 106
On a sleeping infant - 108
Fragments of ancient poetry, by G. Wethers 166, 302, 376
Prologue to Not at Home 170
Natural Bridge - 177
Love and Genius - 244
Weeping Beauty - 244
To Mrs. Mattocks - - 343
Ode to Sorrow, by Wm. Moore Smith, Esq. - 353
Lines to Pleasure - 375
QUICK, actor, life of - 26
Quin, actor, life of - 284, 350
RANTZAU, marshal, memoirs of 39
Rural felicity, a poem - 106
Revenge, performance of - 113
Richard III. exculpation of 159
answer to it - 356
tragedy of, analyzed 180
STAGE, history of 1, 65, 129, 201, 265, 329
Spanish nation, character of 105
Simon Shadow to the Editor of the Mirror - 152, 232, 294
Strength, instance of - 173
Smith, William Moore Esq. his ode to Sorrow - - 353
TRAVELLER, the, an oriental apologue - - - 103
Timour the Tartar, a melo-drama by Lewis, critique upon 370
VERUE, Joanna Baptista, story of - - - 361
WARREN, the actor, life of 73, 140, 213, 274
Windham, Right Hon. William his character - - 290
Women, French and English, compared - - 299
West, the painter, anecdote of 301
Weston, letter of, to the editor 397
Answer to it - - 398
YATES's letter to an editor 42

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE

MIRROR OF TASTE,

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

VOLUME III.] JANUARY, 1811. [NUMBER I.

HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 413, Volume II.]

A DESCRIPTION has already been given of the *ENTREMETS. The MYSTERIES are next to be described: and, as they found their way into the other nations of Europe, as well as France, and may be considered as ranking among the most monstrous and extraordinary anomalies to which the human brain has ever given birth, they deserve a very full and particular share of description.

Few pursuits are more pleasing than the tracing of human inventions, from their highest state of perfection, back to their first unshapen rudiments, and searching in the wide range of conjecture for the first seeds of their conception in the human mind; for, although of such questions no certain solution should be found, the inquiry forms a delightful intellectual exercise; and the result, if at all plausible, comes in time to be taken for granted, and answers a purpose to all intents as useful as the most absolute discovery of truth. Thus the old conjecture, that the breast bone of a water fowl first suggested the idea of that immense moving body which now carries the thunder of Britain from pole to pole, having enough of plausibility to pass uncontradicted, soon obtain-

* See Vol. II, page 414.

Digitized by Google

ed the consent of a world which had neither light nor leisure to investigate such subjects, and, though at first sufficiently problematical, at length acquired the dignity of a postulate. On the subject now in hand proofs are more relevant and perfect, being sanctioned by concurrent testimonies in history.

It has already been stated that the barbarous exhibitions called Feasts, which the French derived from the Romans, received their first shock from the enthusiastic religious spirit diffused through Europe by the crusaders. The *entremets* declined in proportion as the chivalrous spirits of France moved off to the Holy Land; and when the knights of the cross returned from their frantic and disgraceful enterprise, they brought back along with them such multitudes of stories respecting chivalrous adventures, that the christian world was filled with them. Prodigies of valour had no doubt been performed on both sides; but the very nature of the passion which generated the enterprise, and the enthusiasm of those employed in it, rendered it highly probable that for the fame which they acquired by the relation of their prowess they were indebted at least as much to the invention of the narrator as to their own actual deeds of arms.

Such as the stories were however, they were readily believed by a people prepared to receive any tale discreditable to the proselytes of Mahomet, and honourable to christian gentlemen and warriors. Credulity has the digestion of an ostrich; and the people, one and all, not only swallowed with ease, but sanctified from all contradiction, many of those incredible legends, so that to doubt them was deemed a heresy from the orthodox faith. The priests, then the chief, or only dramatists, turned those stories to their advantage, and made them the subjects of plays. The appetite of the public, however, soon began to flag; enthusiasm gradually settled down to something like a rational level; the fierce blaze which dazzled the eyes of the christian world insensibly passed off; and as it faded, the eye of reason, enabled to look more steadily at the object, perceived that it was all madness. Thus the plays founded on the crusades fell into disrepute; and the priests, intent upon preserving to themselves so affluent a source of emolument, desisted from singing the feats of sacerdotal knights errant, and taking up sacred history in their stead, composed and acted dramas founded upon the incidents, and personifying the characters, of the old and new testaments. In order to give full effect to their purpose, and

Digitized by Google

as much as possible preclude opposition or interruption, they formed themselves into a society, to which they gave the name of "THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE PASSION," and, to defray the expenses of their project, brought over some of the most wealthy citizens of Paris to enter into their scheme, and supply the funds, which they themselves were either unable to advance, or unwilling to hazard upon speculation. With the money obtained from these their proselytes, they erected a theatre in the vicinity of Paris, in the *Bourg de St. Maur des Fosses*, a place consecrated to piety, having been long the resort of pilgrims, who visited it for the purposes of devotion. This theatre they opened with a mystery which they called "The History of the Death of our Saviour."

Nothing could surpass the popularity which this species of amusement obtained at once. The number of its followers were incredible. The rage for it spread in all directions, and infected the people with something like an epidemic insanity. The wheels of the public economy were clogged, business was left at a stand, and all, even the most important concerns of life, were neglected for the gratification of this new passion. The evil became at length sufficiently alarming to call for the interposition of the secular authority. The magistracy took it under their cognisance; and in the year twelve hundred and ninety-eight, the prevôt of Paris issued his interdict to suppress the performance of the mysteries. The authority of the civil magistrate, however, was no match for the influence of the priests, who not only got rid of the effects of his interdict, but cunningly turned the interference of the prevôt to their own advantage. They petitioned the king to take off the interdiction, and had the address to put their petition into a shape that excited his curiosity to see their performances. Accordingly they were invited to play before him, and his majesty was so delighted with the poetry and acting that he established the society and their theatre by letters patent. No sooner was it known that the society was established under royal auspices, than the grandees became ardent admirers and proselytes of the drama; the fashionable world followed it with eagerness; multitudes of men of rank became members; and not only the greatest in the king's household, but the king himself, condescended to enrol their names in the company.

Their original theatre being found insufficient, in accommodation of every kind, as well as splendor, it was resolved to have another;

Digitized by Google

but instead of constructing a new one, they cast their eyes on a large building originally founded for the reception of pilgrims, and denominated the Hospital of the Trinity, and converted it into a theatre for the representation of their mysteries. From the descriptions which have been handed down of this theatre, it was admirably constructed for the purpose of giving effect to dramatic exhibitions. The front much resembled those which exist in Britain, France, and America at this day: but all behind the curtain and belonging to the stage differed extremely from them; and being intended for the representation of actions not only on earth, but in heaven and in hell, was so constructed as to represent those three places with great facility. The contrivance and the execution of it is said to have displayed vast mechanical ingenuity. Was the scene to be laid as if in heaven, an enormous congeries of clouds expanded to an immense height, and spread to an extent of which the eye perceived no limits, convolving around the stage: if on earth, the stage represented something like our country scenes, the extremity exhibiting an immense expanse, on which natural objects appeared in proper places: and if in hell, the whole stage was lifted up like the jaw of a monstrous dragon, representing a tremendous and interminable abyss, the mouth of which, vomiting fire, gave up legions of devils.

The first mystery the society represented, intitled, as has been already stated, "the Passion of our Saviour," is thought to have been in all probability written some centuries before; a conjecture which arose from the name of the author being unknown. But for the rest of their dramas, the fraternity are said to be indebted to three poets, who flourished at the same period, in the thirteenth century, and whose writings were deposited among the choice manuscripts of Charles the Sixth. The names of those were Rutebeuf, Bodel, and Adam de la Halle. All their productions that are known were mysteries, which, in their way, were considered excellent. The most celebrated of them being, first, "The Prodigal Son;" secondly, "The Miracle of Theophilus;" thirdly, "The Crusades," and fourthly, "St. Nicholas and the Children in the Tub." These three poets had a multitude (some say not less than sixty) of inferior imitators, of whose compositions some scattered passages are imperfectly spoken of in the history of the French stage. All, however, were alike founded on scripture subjects, reduced to dialogue and action; and some of them are reported to have contained

Digitized by Google

much valuable matter mixed up with more rubbish. It is acknowledged, that whenever the subject, though scriptural, turned from mere religion to things purely domestic and simple, and referred to matters of mere naked morality, abstracted from religious mystery, those writers displayed profound knowledge of the dramatic art, and showed that they possessed many requisites for the composition of amusing and instructive dramas.

As a confirmation of this opinion, it may not be amiss, nor indeed can it be uninteresting, to give a short analysis of one of the pieces just mentioned, "The Prodigal Son," composed by Rutebeuf, so long ago as the year 1240. The story of the Prodigal Son, exclusive of the reverence it demands, as a parable of holy writ, exacts our highest admiration as a simple, natural and affecting lesson of morality. Of the privilege thus afforded him, Rutebeuf has availed himself by departing as much as possible from the track of mystery, and giving the piece up to morality, simplicity and nature. He places his scene in a beautiful country, and makes his characters opulent labouring husbandmen, a class of people to whom, according to nature, any real wants are generally as little known as the artificial necessaries of life. From this he contrives to give, in the character of his Prodigal Son, one of the most beautiful and faithful pictures imaginable of the restlessness of human nature.

Blessed with health, strength and competence, for every wise or honest purpose of life, and assured of every rational blessing for nothing more than the trouble of earning it, the Prodigal Son makes it the business of his life to run counter to reason. He is as vitious as a human being can be supposed to be made without the contagion of bad example. In return for the fondness and unbounded indulgence of his father, he disobeys and torments him; he abhors his brother for no other reason but because, being good and dutiful, he is a contrast to himself; he grows discontented, malicious and wicked; at length determines to go seek his fortune, and, to that end, demands his patrimony, and leaves his father's house. Thus cast forth upon a world, of whose ways he is ignorant, he is delighted, astonished and confounded. He greedily swallows the flattery of the knavish and the interested; and, wilfully credulous, admits the praises bestowed upon his accomplishments, of which he knows himself to be destitute, and receives the compliments lavished on him for his wisdom, his wit, his eloquence and his en-

Digitized by Google

dowments, though in his heart he knows them to be false. In the next stage of depravation, the poet makes him actually fancy he possesses those accomplishments which he before doubted, and in this mood makes him inveigh, with great asperity, against his father and brother for endeavouring to depress his genius, for undervaluing his great merits, and for considering him as no better than a clown, who was born to linger out his life in obscurity. Here the poet brings him to the acme of his folly, and then, by means not less natural and conformable to the experience of man, and to true poetical justice, brings him down to ruin.

He is then found in a public house, where he experiences all the venal respect paid to wealth by the sordid and the selfish. Attendants and waiters fly at his call, and the landlord himself is his humble servant. A lady enters. He immediately falls in love with her. Dinner is served up with wine, music and every treacherous incentive to enjoyment that can "lap the soul (of a fool) in elysium." A second lady is introduced, becomes a competitor with the former for his good graces, and fills him with the ridiculous and ruinous imagination that he is beloved by both, and that they are rival candidates for his affection. He endeavours to satisfy them by assuring each separately that she and she alone is the object of his dearest regards and shall be his choice. They intoxicate him with their flattery, and during the paroxysm, make him drink till he gets dead drunk, when they pick his pockets, share the booty with the landlord, and, leaving him asleep, disappear. In due time he wakes, discovers his loss, deplores and deprecates his folly, grows frantic, raves like a bedlamite, and calls for satisfaction on the landlord, who answers his expostulations by demanding payment of his bill, and when the unhappy wretch declares his incapacity to pay it, kicks him out of the house.

In the next stage the poet exhibits his prodigal HERO begging alms on the highway. And now misery, bringing reason and repentance in its train, calls up his home, with his father and his indulgence and advice, to remembrance, and he weeps in an agony of despair and contrition. His brother then recurs to his mind, living by honest industry and frugality in content and abundance, and his folly smites him to the soul at the contrast of his condition of profligacy and want. While he is in this deplorable condition a countryman finds him, and commiserating his starving situation, employs him to feed his hogs. And now he has time and motives

Digitized by Google

for reflection; the whole of his errors flash conviction on his mind: his repentance becomes deep and unalterable; he resolves to return to his father, and he does so. The father receives him with tenderness: the fatted calf is killed, and the play has precisely the same *denouement* as the parable.

Under the name of a mystery, then, here is a regular drama, replete with simple but impressive morality; a perfect, natural and well coloured picture of man as he ever was, is, and ever will be. The piece too is full of poetical excellence. The plot is perspicuous, grand, delightfully simple, and full fraught with instruction. Though the poet neglected the frigid rules of Aristotle, he studiously investigated nature, and, therefore, without any of the crabbed rules of the Stagyrite, has given his drama a well connected, lucid arrangement—a beginning, a middle, and an end. Had all the mysteries been managed in this way, there would have been no cause, as undoubtedly there was, for reprobating many of them as ridiculous and impious profanations of the holy scriptures.

The objection which holds to the use of sacred matters as subjects for dramatic pieces, does not extend to the writing, but to the acting of them. An attempt to personify beings whose essence we are incapable of even remotely conceiving, is absurd in the highest degree; and, therefore, in its application to things divine, truly abominable. When confined to poetry, in which the being is figured to the imagination, but not corporeally impersonized to the eye, descriptions may be not only admissible, but majestic, awful, sublime: such are the descriptions in Milton's Paradise Lost and Regained. But let us imagine the same scenes dramatized and exhibited in substantial personification, and what can be conceived more intolerable? The more sacred the subject, and the more sublime the poetry, the greater would be the burlesque in action. Fortunately, the mysteries, as they were generally composed, received no addition from the grandeur of the poetry, which was, in most instances, truly miserable; but, on the other hand, it is lamentable to think, that the priests, in their mistaken zeal, always selected the most sacred stories in holy writ, and, therefore, the most dangerous to couple with levity and expose to ridicule and burlesque. Perhaps the excessive enthusiastic religious zeal, and darkness of those times, and the simplicity of the people, may have prevented the effect which the representation of them would now produce: but at this day, nothing can be a more offensive outrage

Digitized by Google

upon christian piety than an impersonized performance on the stage of such sacred subjects as the conception of the virgin Mary, the passion of Christ, and the resurrection. Nor can we help pitying the ignorance or condemning the impiety of the country where such things were permitted.

"The Mystery of the Conception," says the able historian, to whom we are so often indebted, "is composed in fifty-three acts, distributed historically, and traced all the way from the prophecy of ISAIAH to the murder of the innocents, and, without mentioning the choruses, has at least one hundred characters. To go over the plot would be to reiterate all we have read on the subject in the New Testament, which is on the stage tediously spun out in four feet verse, with now and then a few awkward alexandrians, perpetually fishing for the sublime and catching the bathos. The joy of the human race on the coming of the Messiah is truly poetical; so is the discomfiture of the devils; but if it had not been larded with the jokes of the landlord of the inn at Bethlehem, and the devils putting new bolts and bars upon limbo, for fear our Saviour should let out Adam and Eve, it would not have been seasoned to the palates of the people.

"The jests also of those who are employed by Herod to murder the innocents, might as well have been spared; nor can it be forgiven that the devils, after they have tempted Herod with so many flattering promises of reward, should instigate him to cut his throat, afterwards kick his soul about till they are tired, and then enjoy the pleasure of seeing it bubble in a furnace of molten lead." For such was actually the profanation and absurdity which the dramatic ecclesiastics acted upon their theatre; and yet these, for which absurdity is too mild an epithet, and which were sincerely meant for sanctity, are much outdone in impiety by the mystery of "the Passion," and still more by that of "the Resurrection," which actually finishes with a figure dance between Adam, Eve, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, the good thief that was crucified, and an immense number of souls, supposed to be just liberated from limbo.

Wonderful and extravagant as it may appear, these mysteries gained such high reputation in *Paris*, that they spread all over the kingdom. *Rouen*, *Angers*, *Le Mans*, *Metz*, and most of the principal towns, had a company of strollers detached from Paris, by the confraternity, for the pious purpose of exhibiting these mysteries.

Digitized by Google

Among the rest VILLON, the poet, in the fullness of his zeal, became an itinerant, of which a very satirical and ludicrous account is given by the learned and witty RABELAIS.

It may be amusing to read the titles of some of those mysteries taken literally from the French, as published.

"The Triumphant Mystery of Catholic Works in the acts of the "Apostles, taken from St. LUKE, Evangelist and Historiographer; "by ARNOT GREBAN, Canon of Mons."

Another was called the History of the Old Testament. The title ran literally thus—"The Old Testament in which is shown how "the children of Israel passed the Red Sea and reached the Land "of Promise, with several other histories, such as Job, Tobit, "Daniel, Susannah, and Esther."

A third,

"The Vengeance of Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem, "executed by Vespasian and his son Titus, contained in several "Roman chronicles in the reign of Nero, and other fine histories "in honour of our Saviour and the court of Paradise."

A fourth bore this title,

"The mystery of the patience of JOB; and how he lost all his "wealth by war and by fortune; how he was reduced to the "greatest poverty; and how every thing was rendered back again "by the grace of God"

A fifth was intitled,

"The sacrifice of Abraham—this is a French tragedy necessary "to all christians that they may find consolation in times of tribu- "lation and adversity."

This last bore no feature of a tragedy, though called one to give it attraction at a time the public rage for mysteries had abated.

After this, familiar things were considered fitter subjects for the drama than sacred ones. It is evident too, that the authors, who were now chiefly laymen, did all they could to put down that misuse of sacred subjects, and wrote in a way to bring it into contempt. It is impossible otherwise to account for the preposterous titles given by them to some of their pieces; such as

"The joyous mystery of the three kings," and

"The pleasant conceit of the apocalypse of St. John of Zebedee, "in which are contained the visions and revelations of the said St. "John of Patmos."

Digitized by Google

We shall conclude this strange portion of the history with a literal translation of a mystery, in which will be found much piety in language and in thought; but which in the personification of the persons, and representation on the stage, must have been terribl revolting to any heart sensible of the religious passion. We take it from one of the most respectable of the English publications.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

An Angel.	St. John.	St. Simon.
St. James.	St. Bartholomew.	St. Thomas.
St. Peter.	St. Matthew.	St. Philip.

The Holy Ghost is seen to descend.

The Virgin Mary.
Mary Magdalen.

The Angel appears and says to the spectators: Oh, ye, who are desirous of seeing that which is the foundation of your faith, rejoice; your wish shall now be accomplished: lend an attentive ear, and look; then shall you be made acquainted with the wonderful miracle of the Holy Ghost: now, be peaceable and content, and, if it please God, we will begin.

Saint James now comes, and raising his eyes to heaven, says: I reflect, see, wish, and believe that it may be right to visit Mary; her excellent oratory is flattering to God: she can accomplish my desire. I will entreat her to exert the influence which she, a virgin mother, holdeth over her son; I will tell her the time is already past, in which the Holy Ghost was to descend from heaven.

Saint Peter arriving goes toward Jerusalem to seek Mary, but seeing Saint James stops, saying: Whither, James, art thou going, thus in tribulation?

Saint James answers, weeping, and embracing him: Oh, Peter, I am right glad to see thee.

Saint Peter says: Tell me why?

Saint James: Since thou art there, I will tell thee; but do thou have the like complaisance.

Saint Peter replies: I am bound to oblige thee.

Saint James says: Now listen, Peter, and be my words precious to thee. It is my intention to visit the mother of Jesus Christ, that she may remind the Father it is time for God to send us the Holy Ghost from heaven.

Saint Peter with emotion replies: Thy words expand my heart, and an equal zeal inflames my soul. Let us go, and tell her to recommend us to the Son, that he may display to the Father the jealousy which consumes us, if this envoy come not from above, to crown our zeal.

Digitized by Google

The Angel appears to the apostles, to relieve them from suspense, and says: Fervent, holy, and just apostles, whatever your thoughts or wishes may be, put on a stouter countenance; for, to tell you the truth, you have the appearance of malefactors. If you delight, apostles, in the faith of God, wait with a trusting heart; the favour you ask will soon be granted. Now be at peace; let this suffice.

The angel being vanished, the apostles remain in an ecstasy of divine love.

Saint Mary Magdalen says to the Virgin Mary, making her a respectful courtesy: Since it is the will of thy Son, Mary, and he is content thou shouldst be inimitable, none are thy equals: I therefore will depart, with thy leave, for I am unworthy to be thy companion; but I will obey thee as a daughter; give me thy blessing and an embrace, and receive the visiters that anon will be here.

The Virgin Mary, looking at her, replies: Is this the friendship and the affection which I thought thou didst bear me? Thou addest to my affliction. Oh, do not withdraw thyself from my love!

Mary Magdalen says: I obey thee, noblest of mothers; and I hope thou wilt love me as a servant.

The Virgin Mary takes her by the hand, and answers: Nay, as a sister.

The Magdalen: It is not permitted.

The Virgin Mary: Yes, it is.

The Magdalen: That must not be: I am content to be thy servant; of greater honour I am unworthy.

The Virgin Mary, troubled at these words, says: If thou wouldst not bring greater affliction on me, yield to my wish, my dear Magdalen.

Mary Magdalen replies: What affliction, Mary?

The Virgin Mary: That which thy words occasion.

The Magdalen: That must not be. I am ready to oblige thee.

The Virgin Mary, well pleased, says: My wish is then accomplished.

[*The two Marys again seat themselves.*]

Now Saint John, Saint Bartholomew, Saint Matthew, and Saint Simon, the apostles, ascending a hill, their eyes and hands raised to heaven, inspired with divine ardor, and gazing on each other, say with one voice:

Let us all with pious zeal begin our journey, and go in search of Mary, the Mother of God. Let us proceed with good thoughts, prayers, and brotherly love; because such will always be grateful to Jesus, who, with his divine angels, will not forsake us. Let us seek Mary, the Mother of God.

When they have proceeded a little way, they meet Saint Peter, and Saint James, whom they embrace. Saint Peter then says: Where are you all going, thus in holy ecstasy?

Saint John replies: We are going to seek the Holy Ghost.

Saint Bartholomew says: Pray for us, since we have met thee.

Saint Matthew says: Alas, Peter, do us this pleasure.

Saint Simon says: Do not refuse us this favour.

Saint Peter answers: Come all of you with me, and let us depart with joy and rejoicing, under the standard of Mary, the mother.

Digitized by Google

They all depart, saying: Since, Mary, thou art to make us happy, this we request, and nothing more desire; that thou wilt guide us, empress, to thy kingdom: our thoughts fixed on thee, we are ready to depart; snatch us from the sorrows of age, and from the snares of the demon, who is the root of all evil, that thy prayer may be granted. Jesus, send thy Holy Spirit to the inspired, and let thy glory be our boast: deign to favour thy kneeling apostles; who each, in his orisons, invokes thee.

Saint Thomas says, by himself: I have sought the Holy Ghost, through many countries, in vain; it is high time he should discover himself. Moreover, I have thoughts of relinquishing the search. Thomas, thou carriest thy courtesy too far; this peregrination is not to my liking. I will rest myself on the road side, till I have decided whither next to go.

He seats himself, Saint Philip finds him, and says: Well met, faithful comrade.

Saint Thomas replies: The same to thee. Say, where art thou going, my Philip?

Saint Philip says: In search of the Holy Ghost, whom I have long wished to see.

Saint Thomas answers: I too have sought him, and am now resting myself. I have put faith in dreams, and words, only to be mocked.

Saint Philip, grieving, replies: Alas, Thomas, speak not thus! Knowest thou not that faith by itself is sufficient? Rise, and stay no longer here: fortunate is he who puts faith in the Lord. Speak no more the language of distrust; it will not procure thee what thou demandest of the Lord. Come, let us continue our search.

Saint Thomas, again taking his seat, says: I tell thee, I will trouble myself no more.

The angel, seeing them, appears, and says: Your desire is agreeable to the Lord, and shall be granted: take this path. Knowest thou not, Thomas, the Lord is just; that the sword in its proper place can strike? Mend thy manners, and proceed with thy companion: thy comrades are before thee, on their road to the cloisters of Jerusalem, to visit Mary.

Saint Thomas, standing up erect, says in great affliction: Alas, anger overcame me! I have wrongfully abused my God: my shilling is turned to a penny.* I have lost the grace of the Lord; he is, I am sure, incensed against me. Oh, my soul, who will bring thee consolation? The Lord, alas, parted himself from thee, and thou art called to the abyss of hell!

Saint Philip, consoling him, says: Be comforted, God pardons thee: heardest thou not the angelic words? The heavenly crown will be thine. Let us seek those who are before us.

Saint Thomas replies: I am thy inseparable companion.

Saint Philip says: Let us proceed, the sun is yet high; if we meet our comrades on the road, we will go in a body, and visit Mary.

* *A un soldo è tornata la mia lira.* A *lira* is a coin worth twenty *soldi*, about tenpence, English money.

Digitized by Google

Meeting the others, Saint Peter says: Welcome Philip; welcome my Thomas.

Saint Thomas answers: Well met, my comrades.

Saint Peter turns to his companions, and says: Children, this appears to me the house of holiness: let jubilee, good cheer, and harmony, be with us.

Saint John says: Flower of virtue, vase of knowledge, Philip, thou art welcome.

Saint Peter says: Let us all proceed to Jerusalem, where we shall find the Mother of God.

They all depart, singing aloud: Jesus, when we shall have seen this worthy goddess, our souls will be at peace; for we shall leave the Hebrew law. Thy zealous servants will brave death, and the most cruel torments, in thy honour. Oh, Jesus, grant our wish, and our souls will be at peace; for we shall leave the Hebrew law.

Being arrived in the presence of the Virgin Mary, and having paid their obedience, Saint Peter says: He, Madonna, who lay in thy womb, salutes thee; and by his love maintains the harmony among us, which is so grateful to him. He likewise wishes thee to deliver us from a heavy affliction, by the holy mystery of his birth.

The Virgin Mary answers: It is my duty to oblige thee. Welcome to thee and to all thy company. Let each speak freely, for to ask a boon of me is a trifle.

Saint Peter replies: Now hear, Mother of the Omnipotent, the wish that labours in my bosom, and makes me sad; the wish that, above all things, I value. When thy Son ascended to heaven, he said he would depute to us the Holy Ghost. Thy intercession is the object of our demand. Not that we doubt his word; for, kind as he is, and supreme in power and mercy, he will not abandon his faulty servants, whom he has left on this earth.

Mary answers: I will pray for you; dismiss your fears.

Saint Peter continues: Alas, I recommend myself to thee.

Mary replies: Thy wish shall be accomplished.

Saint John says: Madonna, thou knowest we are deserted little orphans;* thou art our only resource; take pity on thy poor servants, for each is in the school of impatience. We are crazy, ignorant, and neglected. Thy prayers will fly to heaven: thou art our eternal guide; thy will governs heaven and earth.

Saint Bartholomew says: Mary, thou art the pilot of this vessel: give us consolation; steer it into port, and guide us, each, with thy sweet propitious breath, to salvation.

Saint Matthew says: Lighten this heavy burden, that we may take the straight path; and that the strayed wanderer may return with thy aid, O Virgin Mary!

Saint Simon says: Oh thou, who, in despite of this humble dwelling, art the exalted Mother of our Lord, in whom the sweetest pity reigns, deign to assuage our grief!

* *Orfanetti*, a diminutive of *orfani:* a flattering and kind expression.

Digitized by Google

Saint Philip says: In charity, condescend to offer up thy all-potent prayers!

Saint James says: Yield to our united entreaties, for I know God will not refuse thee.

The Magdalen says: Pray, Mary, grant their request! Thou art their support, their treasure; as they have already told thee: fulfil their just and holy wish; remember they were the companions of thy Son, and stop the rivulet of their tears.

Saint Thomas says: Mary, relieve the afflicted from their tribulation; thou seest that all apply to thee, invoking thy potent succor.

Mary replies: I will not oppose your combined wish, for your voice is heard in heaven. To reward your holy obedience, I will, in my wisdom, address my Son.

She, kneeling, continues: Son, if ever a wish of mine had weight with thee, let me obtain the request I now make. These, the companions of thy life, are in anxious expectation of seeing the Holy Ghost, as thou didst promise; deliver them from affliction. By the holy conception, which laid thee in my womb; by the divine angel, Gabriel, who came to announce thy nativity; by the milk, which nourished thee; by my unremitting cares; by the countless steps made by the jack-ass, when thou fled'st, a humble lamb, from Herod; by the joy and anguish I have borne for thee, let me remind thee of thy loving apostles, who are living in affliction, and conjure thee to speedily give them the wished for satisfaction. Now, all join with me in prayer, and raise your eyes to heaven.

All the apostles, kneeling, chaunt the following Hymn of praise, with the Virgin Mary: Oh, Jesus, thou who hast been our conductor, here, in company with Mary, let our dolorous complaints cease. Listen to our fervent prayers, and grant relief to thy kneeling, and afflicted, servants. Oh, Jesus, show us grace; let our souls banquet on thy eternal holy light!

This Hymn being sung, the Holy Ghost descends from heaven, and the Virgin Mary, incircled with divine rays, says: Now your wish is granted; be pleased to initiate yourselves in the divine revelation. Your just prayer has been heard, and Jesus will always bear you company.

Saint Peter says: Thou wilt soon, Mary, be left alone; I will not abandon thee.

Mary replies: Depart, with the benediction of God, and remember the passion of our Lord.

The apostles depart, and the boy, dressed as an angel, takes leave, saying: He, who would have a place in the celestial choir, must implore the mercy of Jesus Christ; the Holy Ghost will be sent to him, by my supreme Lord Jesus, who has suffered so much, on earth, to regain Paradise for us: he now dismisses you; always bear him in mind.

THE END.

In Siena, alla *Loggia* del Papa, 1616: *i. e.* printed at the Office or Palace of the Pope.

Digitized by Google

Upon this the English translator makes the following judicious remarks.

"It is surely a subject of great moral and literary curiosity to afford authentic specimens of the progress of the stage; and to pretend to represent and make palpable to the vulgar, a miracle so impossible justly to conceive, as that of the *Descent of the Holy Ghost*, must denote a dangerous excess of rash ignorance in the people and the age. Yet, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, similar exhibitions were the amusement of all ranks: they were the contrivances of monks, respected by the wealthy, and the delight of the people.

"In the Pinelli library, which was sold by auction some years ago, were four volumes, No. 3576,* containing a collection of these holy mysteries; and from volume IV. of this collection the above piece is taken. The translation is as nearly literal as can be required: it is a faithful picture of the verbosity, insipidity, and irreverend manner, which pervade these pieces. The attempt at the politeness of urbanity, in this piece, is remarkable. It was chosen at a venture; for human patience could scarcely endure the fatigue of going through the volumes to discover either the worst or best. I have read enough to convince myself that the difference is not great: of the dull, the profane, and the ludicrous, they are all composed. Some are founded on histories, in the Old and New Testaments; others on legendary tales of Saints; and many on the miracles.

"Notwithstanding the absurdity, and even that which a more enlightened age might perhaps call blasphemy, of these pieces, while they show the simplicity of the people, they also afford sufficient proofs of the reverence, admiration, and zeal, with which they listened to the holy tale, thus represented. They could not admire the diction, eloquence, or wit of them, for they possessed none: in the subtle refinements of mind, such spectators could find no enjoyment: but the miracles, which they believed conduced to their salvation, were listened to with a rapture such as only could be felt by implicit faith. They believed what they heard, were astonished at the information they received, and felt all the raptures

* The third and fourth volumes are in the possession of the editor: they contain ninety-eight pieces, many of them duplicates, and are labelled by the Italian binder—*Antiche Rapprezentazione Sacre.* Their titles and extracts may hereafter be given in the Theatrical Recorder, as curiosities.

Digitized by Google

proper to credulity. Saint Jerom, with his lion in the wilderness, Saint Antony, his pig, and diabolical temptations, or Saint Paul, preaching before Felix, were to them equally true.

"Such historical facts as these, respecting the change of ages and the progress of the human mind, truly interpreted, are awful: they should warn us that it is the propensity of the mind to hold opinions, which are common to the age in which men live; that, while they are only entertained as opinions, though absurd, they are innocent and ought to be respected; and, that persecution for opinion is the most dangerous of the mistakes of man."

BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE.

The justly celebrated actor.

IT may be considered as a proof, not the least satisfactory, of the superior greatness of a man, that nations contend for the credit of having given him birth. Seven illustrious cities of Greece disputed the claim of having given birth to Homer: or to use the expressive lines of the poet,

> Smyrna, Chios, Colophon, Salamis, Rhodes, Argos, Athenæ,
> Orbis de patria certit, Homere.

And the English, with Dr. Johnson at their head, have endeavoured to steal the cradle of Swift from a small court in Castle street Dublin, where Letitia Pilkington has in her Memoirs, and Mr. Thomas Sheridan, who knew all about it much better than Dr. Johnson could, has in his life of the Dean, nailed it down for ever.

Respecting the birth of Mr. Cooke, there was for a short time some contention, between England and Ireland; the former claiming his birth because he owed his education to her, while the latter laid claim to his education because she gave him birth. The truth however is now publicly ascertained in different biographical sketches; and, to such honour as a nation can derive from the birth of a man of genius, and an illustrious actor, Ireland is intitled, on the score of Mr. Cooke. His father was a subaltern officer in the British army, and whether Irish or English by birth, was quartered in the barracks in Dublin, in the year 1756, at which time and place, the hero of these memoirs was born. Indeed, his being an

Digitized by Google

Irishman, is rendered probable by the circumstance of his marriage; our hero's mother who was a lady of very high Scottish extraction, having clandestinely married him for love; thereby entailing upon herself the displeasure of her family, whose proud sense of dignity and hereditary loftiness ever narrow circumstances could not depress. Adventures of this kind are generally supposed to belong more peculiarly to young Irishmen than to others: But since there are fortunehunters of every country, we should not hazard a conjecture on the subject if it had been an interested match on his part: money however was not in the case; the connexion therefore was one of those mere love matches, to which the Irish are so much more prone than their fellow subjects, and which their more cool and calculating neighbours call imprudent.

All the sketches of Mr. Cooke's life, which have appeared in the periodical publications, are so very barren of biographical facts that little more is to be collected from them, than that he was born, educated and became a player; all of which was sufficiently known before: but respecting his family, the fate of his father and mother, and whether they died or still live, these productions are all silent. While destitute of *authentic* materials from the press, discretion enjoins us to be cautious of making use of those which we have been able to collect from report and hearsay information. Much, very much, has been related of Mr. Cooke, in private conversation; much too in the public prints, and in the vagrant train of paragraphs, anecdotes, bonmots, greenroom gabble, and theatrical chitchat with which the newspapers of England abound. The far greater part of these we distrust too much to admit them into this sketch, as facts. We recollect, however, to have heard some years ago, from persons who not only well knew Mr. Cooke, but took, as we thought, a deep and sincere interest in his fame and welfare, that his parents highly resented his going on the stage, and carried that resentment to the grave, to his entire exclusion from the little patrimony to which his birth intitled him; and, that this circumstance made an impression upon his sensibility which had nearly been fatal to his life, and was thought to be the *radical cause of all his subsequent misfortunes*. As this was given not only with every appearance of sincere sorrow, but with a minute circumstantiality of detail, seldom associated with falsehood, we did at the time give it full credence; and we have not since had any reasonable grounds for withdrawing our belief; at the same time we

Digitized by Google

should be sorry to be responsible for the authenticity of the facts, and therefore will barely say that from collateral circumstances, they seem to us at least probable. If they be true, then it may reasonably be inferred from them, as well as from his being an officer in the army, that Mr. Cooke's father, as well as his mother, was of a high gentleman's family; since inveterate prejudices against the stage life, and a contempt of actors, have for a long time been unknown to any other description of people.

While our hero was yet a child, his father went, probably with his regiment, to London, where he remained five years, then moving to the North of England, placed George at a school, at which he remained till he had accomplished his fifteenth year. It was during this period of his life he first conceived an attachment to the stage, or to use his own words, as they are related of him, became infected with the theatrical *mania*.

The first play Cooke ever read was Venice Preserved; than which, not one in the British drama is more calculated to fasten itself upon the heart of a boy of warm imagination, or to nourish in him and augment a secret natural predisposition for the drama. The same cannot be said of the first play he ever saw: the courtly gravity of Lord Townly in the Provoked Husband, even if it had been better performed than it could have been by Mr. James Aickin, being little calculated to kindle the flame of genius in a youthful bosom: Venice Preserved, however, was fully sufficient; and the boy felt his appetite for dramatic poetry now so very keen, that he had no rest till he borrowed from a clergyman, who resided in the town, a complete set of Shakspear's works, which he may be said rather to have devoured than perused. A volume of his adored poet was his manual by day, the companion of his pillow by night: On him he meditated incessantly, and, to use the words of Hamlet, hung upon the great bard, "as if increase of appetite had grown by what it fed upon." His exclusive devotion to this object of idolatry broke in upon his school studies; his tasks were neglected, or but half performed; and he was often compelled to pay the smarting price of birchen discipline, for the delight he received from the drama: but the severity of his master, however just, had only the effect of all severe persecutions, and attached him the more violently to his ruling passion. The bent was fixed in his nature; opposition increased it; and soon enough opportunities occurred of practical operation, which completely confirmed his propensity, and gave to

Digitized by Google

the predisposing influence of his will, the full force and effect of habit.

The enthusiasm of our hero imparted itself, though in a less degree to his companions. The glowing effusions of Shakspear's muse poured forth by him incessantly "with good emphasis, and good discretion," could not be entirely resisted by the warm sensibility of ingenuous youth; and it was at length agreed that a play should be got up among themselves, and acted privately. The choice of the piece being left to Cooke, he selected Hamlet, intending to perform the principal character himself: He had the mortification, however, to find that his youth evicted him from the part in the opinion of his companions, and to see a comparative dunce usurp it, only because he was elder. He was obliged to take up with Horatio therefore, which he did with great regret. He had, nevertheless, cause to rejoice in the end, for he had the consolation of a complete triumph over his rival Hamlet; since, circumscribed and unimportant as the character of Horatio is, his performance of it was such that he made it in acting the superior character of the two, and obtained more applause than the Hero of the piece. The next play, which our juvenile party enacted, was Cato; in getting up which, a circumstance occurred still more unpropitious and revolting to our hero's feelings. To avoid all cause of altercation, it was agreed to determine the cast of the *dramatis personæ* by lot. Cooke drew Lucia: and such was the chagrin he experienced at the idea of wearing a petticoat, instead of strutting in a Roman toga, that the supposed degradation had nearly quenched the ardor of his passion, and crushed his scenic ambition in its very outset. But the plaudits, he received, afforded a seasonable relief to his irritation.

On his emancipation from school discipline, in 1771, he went to sea, and afterwards embarked in business; but less from inclination than necessity. Accordingly, at the age of twenty-one, he spurned at trade, as an occupation unworthy of his aspiring mind, and, coming into possession of a legacy bequeathed him by a distant relation, quitted all employment, to indulge his favourite passion and pursuit. It was not, however, till he had run through his inheritance, that he made his *debut* on the public boards.

His first appearance on any regular stage was in the spring of 1778, when he performed the part of Castalio in the Orphan, at the Hay Market theatre, for the benefit of Mrs. Massey; and, with such complete success as determined him to embrace the profession as

Digitized by Google

his future means of support. He played two or three subsequent nights at the Hay Market, and then joined a provincial company. From this period, till the summer of 1786 (with the exception of nearly two years, when a second family windfall enabled him to act the part of the gentleman *at large*), Cooke ran the customary round of Thespian itinerancy; passing his noviciate in various provincial companies, particularly those of Nottingham and Lincoln. In July 1786, he inlisted under the banners of the York manager, Mr. Wilkinson, and came out in the part of count Baldwin, the same night that Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance at that theatre, in Isabella, in the Fatal Marriage.

The May following, he repaired to Lancaster, having joined the Newcastle company, with whom he continued four years, performing successively at Newcastle, Chester, Lancaster, Preston and other towns belonging to that district. In April 1791, he entered into an engagement with the manager of the Manchester theatre, to whom his talents were already experimentally known; Mr. Cooke having, previously to his treaty with the York manager, acted at Manchester a whole season with great applause, besides a winter spent at Liverpool. In November 1794, Mr. Cooke visited the capital of the sister kingdom at the pressing invitation of Mr. Daly, at that time director of the Dublin stage.

He returned to England the following year, and in March 1796, rejoined the Manchester company, with whom he stood in high favour and repute; and, indeed it reflects no small honour on the taste and penetration of the inhabitants of that town, that among the foremost to discern, they have been among the foremost likewise to foster and encourage the talents of a man, who owes his professional success entirely to his own intrinsic merit.

In October 1797, Mr. Cooke made a second trip to Dublin, the management of that theatre having devolved into the hands of the present patentee, Mr. Jones. Here he remained three years, rapidly rising in celebrity and favour, being justly regarded as the hero of the Dublin stage, and the Roscius of Ireland.

The state of the internal policy and economy of Covent Garden theatre, rendering it at that time indispensably necessary to secure a powerful accession of talents, in the event of certain contingencies then undecided, the proprietor very naturally directed his inquiring eye to our hero, whose growing reputation and acknowledged excellence pointed him out as the fittest person to counter-

Digitized by Google

balance the weight of popular talents at the other house; as well as to supply the loss which might possibly accrue from any defection then apprehended in his own corps. Offers were accordingly made to Mr. Cooke, of too tempting and persuasive a nature, to be easily resisted; and, thus the town became indebted to Mr. Harris for the acquisition of an actor, who ranks among the very brightest ornaments of the profession. It was on the thirty-first of October 1800 he made his first appearance on the Covent Garden boards in the character of Richard the Third, and made a far more powerful impression on the public than any actor since the debut of Garrick. Expectation had been raised to the highest pitch, from his fame which renown had blazoned abroad: never were interest and curiosity more strongly excited; never was any appearance crowned with more distinguished success. The wonders of his performance flew like wild fire through the city, so that on his next appearance which was in Shylock, the house was crammed full. That season he played Richard fifteen times more, to overflowing houses; and every season afterwards, his Richard continued to be a standing weekly dish, a thing never known before, and which till it actually occurred could not have been believed. Richard had not for many years been attractive: three or four times in one season was the most to which it had been extended with profit; and even so, it was considered as a worn out old stock piece. That it should regularly on each Monday night, for several years, bring full houses at Covent Garden theatre, is a proof of the superlative powers of the actor, which no human argument, however invigorated by genius or animated by spleen, can possibly overturn.

His performance of Shylock was thought to fall very little, if at all, short of that of Macklin. It is pretty remarkable that, in that prostration of mind, and total eclipse of memory, which rendered the last few years of Mr. Macklin's life little better than a childish blank, he frequently spoke of some actor he had seen in a northern company of strollers, who played the character of Shylock to his perfect satisfaction. "By the L—d sir," he would say, "the fellow played it as well as I could." He would then naturally advert to the loss of his memory, and deplore his not being able to tell "the fellow's name." The first night Cooke appeared in Shylock on the Covent Garden boards this writer was in the pit accompanied by one who had been a particular confidential intimate and relation of the deceased veteran; and he immediately said,

Digitized by Google

"Certainly this is the very actor of whom *old Mac* used to speak so warmly." To Shylock succeeded Iago, Kitely, Sir Giles Overreach, Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, Sir Archy M'Sarcasm and others. In all of which he possessed stronger powers of attraction than any actor that has existed within the last thirty years.

That Cooke, as a great and original genius, stands preeminently above all others of his profession now living, will hardly be denied by any one who weighs his merits fairly, and recollects how little he owes to elaborated art, and what a deadly enemy he carries within himself to the full and fair exercise of his talents. So little artificial indeed is there in his acting, that those who have formed their opinions of the profession upon what they have seen done by others, now living, can at first scarcely consider him an actor. In that admirable picture of human life, the novel of Tom Jones, Fielding places Tom Jones and his friend Partridge in the gallery to see the tragedy of Hamlet—Hamlet by Garrick. Partridge, ignorant of the drama, and of the characters of actors, enjoys the whole play, as a mere child of nature: is frightened at the ghost, wonders at Hamlet's venturing to follow it, and so on. The play being over, Jones asks Partridge his opinion of the play, and above all which he thinks the best actor. Why the king to be sure, says Partridge. "The world think differently," returns Jones; "all concur in pronouncing him that played Hamlet the best player in the world." "What! the little man in black?" replies Partridge, confidently; "no, no, dont you think to persuade me to that! why I should have acted just as he did, if I had seen a ghost myself. No, no, he is no actor." In many of his assumed characters, a person as simple as Partridge would be likely to make the same remark on Cooke.

The first time Garrick made his appearance, he boldly struck into the path of nature, bursting from the old beaten road of slow, monotonous singsong drawling. At first the audience could not decide, or indeed imagine what he meant. Truth and nature, however, soon broke forth in a full blaze upon them; and Quin, Ryan, and the whole train of monotonists, sunk from the public eye like the ghosts in Richard. Quin, who was as candid in heart, as coarse in language, when prevailed upon to see him, said, "If he be right, we have been all wrong; and by the L—d I am afraid he is." Something of the same kind of dubious sensation was experienced, we are told, at New York on Cooke's first appearance. After the tedious, monotonous syllabizing, dead march speechifying, to which

Digitized by Google

this country has hitherto been so much accustomed, the natural acting, and familiar colloquial speech of Cooke, seemed at first strange and new; but being conformable to nature, it stood its ground, and has carried away the crown of laurel.

We have written much, and read more upon Mr. Cooke's professional powers, having admired him extremely from the first time we saw him: but we have not yet met with any thing which for correct and luminous conception, truth, and brilliance of colouring can be put in competition with a critique on his Richard, which lately appeared in a New York paper. To prevent such an exquisite morceau from being buried in an unwieldy file, and mixed with the advertisements and other lumber of a newspaper, and at the same time to offer our readers, (not one in a hundred of whom will have met with it in its original place) a just description, dressed up in language and illustrated with reflections superior to any we can pretend to employ, we extract so much of that critique as relates to our present subject.

"Mr. Cooke's style of acting," says the New York critic, "is vivid, original, and impressive. It is the product of genius, improved and exalted by taste and study. His excellence is drawn altogether from the resources of his own capacious mind. Nature has been by no means lavish in her bounties to the person or voice of this eminent tragedian. His figure is neither majestic nor symmetrically proportioned: his voice, though not deficient in compass, is neither mellow nor varied: his gesticulation is more expressive than elegant: his gait is less distinguished for grace, than ease and freedom; and it may be greatly questioned whether his stage walk is always compatible with the dignity of a hero. In what then, it may be asked, does the wonderful superiority of Cooke consist? We answer, in the force and comprehension of his genius, the boldness and originality of his manner, the significance of his gestures, the astonishing flexibility of his countenance, and the quick and piercing expression of his eye, united to his thorough knowledge, not only of the text, but the meaning of his author. Mr. Cooke, in Richard, differs not more widely from, than he surpasses, every other representative of the part. He not only enters on the threshold of the character, but is absolutely lost in its mazes. In all the diversified humors of the crookbacked tyrant, whether his duplicity is employed in wooing the affections of the fickle Anne; whether his daring ambition is crowned with success or thwarted

Digitized by Google

by opposing accidents; whether his cool malignant sarcasms are thrown out at the court flies that surround him, or his perturbed spirit wanders in the world of terrible shadows; he uniformly appears, through every change and variety of scene, impregnated with the genius of his author; always impressive, always Richard.

To analyze his acting, is to enter into an enumeration of all his beauties. Our limits will only permit us to notice a few of the the most prominent. In his first interview with Lady Anne, the deep dissembling cunning of Richard assumed an air of such perfect sincerity, that it might have deceived a mind less weak and trusting than the one whose credulity he so successfully played upon. In the same scene, where the mock-penitent tyrant demands his death from Anne, Mr. Cooke contrived to throw in the part a wonderful degree of force and expression. When he exclaims,

> Nay, do not pause, for I did kill king Henry—
> But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.
> Nay, now despatch, 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward—
> But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

His instantaneous transition from the former to the latter part of each sentence, and his accompanying expressions of ardent attachment, displayed a mind deeply read in the language of genuine passion. The cool and settled malignity of Richard's heart in the sentence

> I can smile, and smile, and murder while I smile,

was uttered by Mr. Cooke with admirable effect. And his subsequent adherence to the character which he here gives of himself, proves at once the force of his genius and the strength of his judgment. His affected piety and humility before the lord mayor, and his seeming unwillingness to accept the crown, were finely portrayed. Throughout this scene he not only evinced the deep cunning of a practised villain, but the archness of a fiend. His burst of triumphant exultation at the success of his schemes, the energy of his manner in grasping the hand of Buckingham, and the vehemence with which he threw the prayer-book from him, at the departure of the lord mayor, were highly expressive of the swelling ambition of the proud and aspiring Gloster. Mid the noise and bustle that preceded the battle of Bosworth Field, there was nothing so preeminently conspicuous as the cool, collected and thoughtful manner of Richard. His manner of bidding good night to the

Digitized by Google

lords Surrey and Norfolk, was truly inimitable. It is in the delicate touches of nature like these, that the comparative excellence of actors can be fairly tested. To catch and embody, as it were, by the combined force of genius and judgment, a concealed beauty that has forever escaped vulgar perception, is the peculiar province and the highest merits of an exalted performer. Mr. Cooke was by no means as successful in the fifth as in the preceding acts. His exclamation on starting from his couch,

> Give me another horse—bind up my wounds!
> Have mercy Jesu!

were not sufficiently descriptive of the wildness and disorder which, at that moment, haunted the guilty soul of Richard. In this and the following passage, where he exclaims "a thousand hearts are swelling in my breast," there was less force and vehemence in his manner, than we have been accustomed to witness in the Richard of Cooper, and less, we think, than the character demanded. Upon the whole, however, Mr. Cooke is unquestionably the best representative of the part that has ever appeared on the American boards. It is a character which he has so profoundly studied, so happily conceived, and so masterly delineated, that perhaps, taking it all in all, we shall never witness a performance so replete with beauties, so finished, and so faultless."

To lament that the efforts of superior genius should be counteracted by great faults and foibles, would perhaps, be to impeach the dispensations of Providence, and to lament that men are men. It was Swift, I believe, who said that a few men of genius (I don't know how many, but certainly not more than four or five), if combined together and true to each other, could control and govern mankind: But that Providence, in order to prevent that mischief, implanted in the nature of such men unextinguishable hatred and hostility to each other. May not something of the same kind be said of men of superior talents, individually? May we not, as a theory at least, suppose that the follies or the vices which are, with so very few exceptions, seen coupled with genius in every department of life, mechanic and scientific, are placed there for the purpose of preventing that undue ascendency which it might otherwise enable its possessors to obtain over others. Let us then take men as nature or accident, both alike in the directing hands of the Creator, may have moulded them;

Digitized by Google

Let us make use of the good and overlook the evil: and if in the present instance some blemishes at times break in upon, and for the moment impair the excellence of the actor, let us recollect that they do not destroy it; let us call to mind what as pious and virtuous a man, and as profound a moral philosopher as any that ever lived from the creation of the world to this day, once said of Mr. Fox, and apply it to the present subject. "He has faults; but they are faults that, though they may in a small degree tarnish the lustre, and sometimes impede the march, of his abilities, have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great excellence." "What contrarieties," says the enlightened *Auberi du Maurier*, "often occur in the same person! How often the indulgence of one foible prevents the exertion and the advantage of many good qualities, and many virtues!" This he says by way of exordium to the history of Marshal Rantzau, in his memoirs of Hamburgh. The only failing which can be set off against the great merits of George Frederick Cooke is unfortunately too well known to require particular mention in this place; if it were not, we should not even distantly allude to it; and in adverting to it we have no other object in view but, while recognising the fact, to assure our readers that it happens much seldomer than the foulmouthed tongue of slander has related; that it leaves still a great superabundance of means to please, to delight, and to instruct; and that in a public career of many, many years, it has not yet been able to lower his professional character below the standard of *the first living actor*.

LIFE OF MR. QUICK, THE CELEBRATED COMEDIAN.

Extracted from a London publication.

THIS excellent comedian was born in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, where his father was an eminent brewer. At the age of fourteen, he left his parents for the precarious life of a player, and joined a little strolling company, in the vicinity of London, whose manager was the famous Oliver Carr, who boasted of having taught Garrick* to act, when he first made his appearance at Goodman's Fields.

* It is said that Carr dressed Richard in the same garments which were worn by Garrick on his first appearance in that part at Goodman's Fields. This dress was held by the strollers of his company, in high estimation; and

Digitized by Google

At Fulham Mr. Quick commenced his theatrical career; and, for the first time offered himself to public notice, in the character of Altamont, in the Fair Penitent, which he personified so much to the satisfaction of the manager Mr. Carr, that he desired his wife in the course of the play, to set young Quick down a whole share, which at the close of the farce, amounted to *three shillings*.

In the counties of Kent and Surrey, he figured away, with great success; and before he was eighteen, performed Hamlet, Richard the Third, Romeo, George Barnwell, Jaffier, Tancred, and many other characters, in the higher walks of tragedy. While he was in Kent, he and his brother adventurers made a halt at a country town, and put up at a small alehouse, as their place of residence during their performance. Their appearance however not being much approved of by the landlord, he secured two large trunks which contained the riches of the company, who intended to represent Macbeth on the following day. In the evening they all repaired to the barn to rehearse: at the same time the landlord, being intent upon observing their movements, applied his ear to a crevice in the door, and hearing the song of the assembled witches of, "we'll fly by night," in consternation from fear of losing his bill, exclaimed, to the astonishment of the *weird sisters*, "ay, ay, you villains, you may fly, but I'll be d—d if I hav'nt stopped your boxes."

One night old Carr, the manager, was dressed to perform Hamlet, at Croyden, and the hay loft in which he exhibited contained a door, behind the scenes, which was about ten feet from the ground, and opened over a dunghill that had been made up of a large quantity of human soil. Poor old Carr, who was generally in a state of intoxication, had mistaken this door for one of a better communication, and the first step instantly precipitated him into the filth, where he lay floundering for near an hour.

In a few minutes his presence was necessary to begin the play; but, to the surprise of every one behind the scenes, he was not to be found; there was no suspicion of his having gone out that way. The audience presently became clamorous, and demanded a reason for the delay; when they were immediately informed by a performer, that Mr. Carr had suddenly vanished, and the most in-

as their wardrobe was not overstocked, it was frequently used in comedy as well as tragedy.

Digitized by Google

dustrious search for him had proved unsuccessful; that they had sent to all the public houses in the neighbourhood, but could not hear any tidings of the manager. He then observed, that poor Mrs. Carr, who was to personate the queen, had gone about the scenes to look for her dear husband, and had also vanished, though there was no probable way out, but by the stage door, which had never been left all the evening. This address threw the audience into the utmost consternation and alarm: some persons said, that the players were the children of the devil, and that his black majesty had joined the company, to kick up capers with them: others observed that it was a trick to cheat them out of their money, and not perform.

During this whimsical scene of confusion, however, some of the spectators near the stairs up which they came into the theatre, cried out—a stink! a stink!

This drew the attention of the company to the entrance of the house, when to the astonishment of every one present, up came Hamlet and his wife, completely enveloped in the golden treasure of Cloacina's Temple; and being in the utmost paroxysm of rage at their ill fortune and filthy condition, they pushed through the audience to the stage, regardless of either the clothes of their company, or the delicacy of their olfactory nerves.

As soon as the confusion was a little appeased, old Carr came forward and told the company, that though the queen and himself had been *interred* before their time, he would with their permission begin the play, which he did, to the great entertainment of his rustic auditors; who, through every scene of the tragedy, exhausted their wit and jokes, at the expense of the manager and his company.

During Mr. Quick's theatrical travels, a whimsical dispute took place, at St. Mary Cray in Kent, between him and a brother actor, with respect to which of the two should be the first gravedigger in Hamlet. The contest was carried on, even to the representation before the audience, in which the rivals took their stations opposite to each other in the grave; where to the no small entertainment of the house, they chaunted the same ditty, and repeated the same part. At length, however the good humor of the audience was exhausted; and opinions, concerning the right of choice between the Thespian heroes, were divided. Presently all was confusion and uproar, which at length subsided, on Quick's grappling the *skull*,

Digitized by Google

which was a *sheep's head*, together with a *long beef marrow bone:* of these he kept possession until the entrance of Hamlet, whose gravity was not a little disturbed on the occasion.

An arch wag among the spectators, on Hamlet's saying to the skull, "Get thee to my lady's chamber," said, "no, no, send it to little Quick's dressing room."

But to pursue Mr. Quick's professional progress more immediately, it is necessary to observe, that in a few years he greatly distinguished himself as an actor of versatile talents; and his fame having reached Mr. Foote, he was engaged by that gentleman, for some of the minor parts of the drama. In this theatre however, he remained without having an opportunity of showing his talents to advantage, till Mr. Shuter, in June 1766, took an extra benefit. and asked Mr. Quick to perform Mordecai, in Love-a-la-Mode. Macklin, who was standing by, immediately encouraged him to take the part, and promised to give instructions with respect to his manner of playing it. When Quick waited on Macklin to receive his instructions, he asked the young comedian whether he knew the *first* qualification of an actor, and immediately gave the precept, which was, *to be able to stand still.*

Quick closely adhered to the advice of his preceptor; and when he personified the Jew, Macklin expressed his high approbation of Quick's exertions, together with a prediction of his future excellence. Woodward and Shuter, who were present, took also particular notice of his performance, and warmly recommended him to Mr. Colman, who that year had become a patentee of Covent Garden theatre, and engaged him. For a season or two, he was the fag of the theatre, and happy to get any of the characters which Woodward, Shuter, and Dunstall, either gave up, or objected to perform. At length an opportunity offered, which at once established Quick's consequence with the manager and the public.

Younger, the prompter had seen him perform Mungo at Canterbury, with great success; and, while arranging with Mr. Colman the performers to represent the Padlock, he recommended Quick in the strongest terms; in consequence of which our young hero got the part instead of Mr. Dyer, to whom Mr. Colman first intended to give Mungo. His personification of the whimsical black procured considerable favour with the public, and laid the foundation of his future fame. The next character in which he displayed his comic powers to advantage, was Tony Lumpkin; and, his assump-

Digitized by Google

tion of it was not only satisfactory to the public, but the subject of Dr. Goldsmith's continued eulogium.

But the parts, which most completely raised him to the class of our first rate comedians, were Acres, and Isaac Mendoza, in Mr. Sheridan's Rivals and Duenna. After his personification of these, he obtained a choice of characters, and stood before the public as one of the leading performers of Covent Garden theatre.

He then became joint manager of the Bristol theatre; and, there he married his present wife, who is the daughter of a respectable clergyman of that city; and by whom he has a son and a daughter, who have approached adult life, and who unite considerable accomplishments to personal endowments.

Some years before he left Covent Garden, he undertook the character of Richard the Third for his benefit. It was his intention to make a *serious* attempt; but the public naturally expected a *comic* one; and finding his audience inclined to mirth, he indulged their humor, and gave them a complete burlesque, which met with general laughter and approbation. It is worthy of remark, that in the course of twenty years' professional duty to the public and his manager, he was rarely out of play and farce; and, during that number of years, but two apologies were made to the town on account of his ill health.

In the season of 1798, he felt, with the fatigues of his profession, his constitution very much shaken; and, after performing Major Oakly for Mrs. Mattocks's benefit, in May of the same year, he withdrew from the avocations of the theatre, by medical advice, and retired to Cheltenham, where the salutary waters and change of air restored him to perfect health. Fearful of relapsing into the same indisposed state that the duties of Covent Garden theatre had brought on, he resolved to try the effects of travelling, and accordingly visited, in a professional capacity, Edinburgh, York, Hull, Birmingham, and Liverpool; at all which places his exertions proved very lucrative to him.

In June 1806, he was engaged to perform at Cheltenham; and on his way thither the stage coach was overturned; by which accident his arm was broke; and he was rendered incapable of proceeding on his journey. He is now perfectly recovered, and continues his professional excursions in various parts of England, with the most flattering success. It has been erroneously reported, that Mr. Quick had wholly abandoned the thought of returning to the Lon-

Digitized by Google

don stage. On inquiry, we find, that whenever overtures are made to him, adequate to the importance of his services, he is ready to resume his public character, on the boards of either of our metropolitan theatres.

In the hands of Mr. Quick, the characters sustained by the late Mr. Parsons and Mr. Suett, would receive an importance to which they have lately been unaccustomed in the hands of Mr. Mathews.

We have already mentioned several characters in which Mr. Quick stands unrivalled as their representative; and, a very long list of others might be enumerated, in which he is equally great: in justice however, to his professional character, we must be permitted to notice him in a few plays. The person of Mr. Quick is happily formed for a comedian: with features beaming with good humor, he has eyes particularly expressive of mirth, and a facetiousness of disposition. His personification of Justice Woodcock, in Love in a Village; Sancho Panza; Sharp, in the Lying Valet; Barnaby Brittle; Doctor, in Animal Magnetism; and a great variety of opposite characters, are still recollected with pleasure; and we hope the unique powers of this excellent comedian will again adorn the boards of one of the winter theatres. If the public should not have that treat, the fault will not rest with Mr. Quick.

MISCELLANY.

ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS OF MASSINGER.

(Continued from page 429 of 2d volume.)

IT was hinted before, that the character of Pisander, in the *Bondman*, is more interesting than that of Sforza. His virtues so unsuitable to the character of a slave, the boldness of his designs, and the steadiness of his courage, excite attention and anxiety in the most powerful manner. He is perfectly consistent, and, though lightly shaded with chivalry, is not deficient in nature or passion. Leosthenes is also the child of nature, whom perhaps we trace in some later jealous characters. Cleora is finely drawn, but to the present age, perhaps, appears rather too masculine: the exhibition of characters which should wear an unalterable charm, in their finest and almost insensible touches, was peculiar to the prophetic genius

Digitized by Google

of Shakspeare.* Massinger has given a strong proof of his genius, by introducing in a different play a similar character, in a like situation to that of Pisander, yet with sufficient discrimination of manners and incident: I mean Don John, in the *Very Woman*, who like Pisander gains his mistress's heart, under the disguise of a slave. Don John is a model of magnanimity, superior to Cato, because he is free from pedantry and ostentation. I believe he may be regarded as an original character. It was easy to interest our feelings for all the characters already described; but no writer, before Massinger, had attempted to make a player the hero of tragedy. This, however, he has exccuted, with surprising address, in *the Roman Actor*. It must be confessed that Paris, the actor, owes much of his dignity to incidents: at the opening of the play, he defends his profession successfully before the senate. This artful introduction raises him, in our ideas, above the level of his situation; for the poet has "graced him with all the power of words:" the impressed passion for him places him in a still more distinguished light, and he meets death from the hands of the emperor himself in a mock play. It is, perhaps, from a sensation of the difficulty of exalting Paris's character, and of the dexterity requisite to fix the attention of the audience on it, that Massinger says, in the dedication of this play, that "he ever held it the most perfect birth of his Minerva." I know not whether it is owing to design, or to want of art, that Romont, in *the Fatal Dowry*, interests us as much as Charalois, the hero. If Charalois surrenders his liberty to procure funeral rites for his father, Romont previously provokes the court to imprison him, by speaking with too much animation in the cause of his friend. Romont, though insulted by Charalois, who discredits his report of Beaumette's infidelity, flies to him with all the eagerness of attachment, when Charalois is involved in difficulties by the murder of Novall and his wife; and avenges his death, when he is assassinated by Pontalier. Rowe, who neglected the finest parts of this tragedy in his plagiarism, (the Fair Penitent), has not failed to copy the fault I have pointed out. His Horatio is a much finer character than his Altamont; yet he is but a puppet when compar-

* If Massinger formed the singular character of Sir Giles Overreach from his own imagination, what should we think of his sagacity, who have seen this poetical phantom realized in our days? Its apparent extravagance required this support.

Digitized by Google

ed with Massinger's Romont. Cameola, *The Maid of Honour*, is a most delightful character; her fidelity, generosity, dignity of manners, and elevation of sentiments are finely displayed, and nobly sustained throughout. It is pity that the poet thought himself obliged to debase all the other characters in the piece in order to exalt her. There is an admirable portrait of old Malefort, in that extravagant composition, *The Unnatural Combat*. The poet seems to equal the art of the writer whom he here imitates:

> I have known him
> From his first youth, but never yet observed,
> In all the passages of his life and fortunes,
> Virtues so mix'd with vices: valiant the world speaks him,
> But with that, bloody; liberal in his gifts too,
> But to maintain his prodigal expense,
> A fierce extortioner.—Act 3. sc. 2.

Almira and Cardenes, in the *Very Woman*, are copied from nature, and therefore never obsolete. They appear like many favourite characters in our present comedy, amiable in their tempers, and warm in their attachments, but capricious and impatient of control. Massinger, with unusual charity, has introduced a physician in a respectable point of view, in this play. We are agreeably interested in Durazzo,* who has all the good nature of Terence's Micio, with more spirit. His picture of country sport may be viewed with delight even by those who might not relish the reality:

> Rise before the sun,
> Then make a breakfast of the morning dew,
> Served up by nature on some grassy hill;
> You'll find it nectar.

In the *City Madam*, we are presented with the character of a finished hypocrite, but so artfully drawn, that he appears to be rather governed by external circumstances, to which he adapts himself, than to act, like Moliere's Tartuffe, from a formal system of wickedness. His humility and benevolence, while he appears as a ruined man, and as his brother's servant, are evidently produced by the presence of his misfortunes; and he discovers a tameness, amidst the insults of his relations, that indicates an inherent baseness of disposition.† When he is informed that his brother has re-

* The Guardian.

† See particularly his soliloquy, Act 3. sc. 2.

Digitized by Google

tired from the world, and has left him his immense fortune, he seems at first to apprehend a deception.

> O my good lord!
> This heap of wealth which you possess me of,
> Which to a worldly man had been a blessing,
> And to the messenger might with justice challenge
> A kind of adoration, is to me
> A curse I cannot thank you for; and much less
> Rejoice in that tranquillity of mind
> My brother's vows must purchase. I have made
> A dear exchange with him: he now enjoys
> My peace and poverty, the trouble of
> His wealth conferr'd on me, and that a burthen
> Too heavy for my weak shoulders.—Act 3. sc. 2.

On receiving the will, he begins to promise unbounded lenity to his servants, and makes professions and promises to the ladies who used him so cruelly in his adversity, which appear at last to be ironical, though they take them to be sincere. He does not display himself till he has visited his wealth; the sight of which dazzles and astonishes him so far as to throw him off his guard, and to render him insolent. Massinger displays a knowledge of man not very usual with dramatic writers, while he represents the same person as prodigal of a small fortune in his youth, servile and hypocritical in his distresses, arbitrary and rapacious in the possession of wealth suddenly acquired: for those seeming changes of character depend on the same disposition variously influenced; I mean, on a base and feeble mind, incapable of resisting the power of external circumstances. In order, however, to prepare us for the extravagance of this character, after he is enriched, the poet delineates his excessive transports on viewing his wealth in a speech which cannot be injured by a comparison with any soliloquy in our language:

> 'Twas no fantastic object, but a truth,
> A real truth; nor dream: I did not slumber,
> And could wake ever with a brooding eye
> To gaze upon't! It did endure the touch,
> I saw and felt it! yet what I beheld
> And handled oft, did so transcend belief,
> (My wonder and astonishment pass'd o'er,)
> I faintly could give credit to my senses.
> Thou dumb magician, [taking out a key], that without a charm,

Digitized by Google

Didst make my entrance easy, to possess
What wise men wish and toil for! Hermes' moly,
Sibylla's golden bough, the great elixir,
Imagin'd only by the alchemist,
Compared with thee are shadows,—thou the substance,
And guardian of felicity! No marvel,
My brother made thy place of rest his bosom,
Thou being the keeper of his heart, a mistress
To be hugg'd ever! In by-corners of
This sacred room, silver in bags heap'd up
Like billets sawed and ready for the fire,
Unworthy to hold fellowship with bright gold
That flowed about the room, conceal'd itself.
There needs no artificial light; the splendor
Makes a perpetual day there, night and darkness
By that still burning lamp forever banish'd!
But when guided by that, my eyes had made
Discovery of the caskets, and they open'd,
Each sparkling diamond from itself shot forth
A pyramid of flames, and in the roof
Fix'd it a glorious star, and made the place
Heaven's abstract or epitome! rubies, sapphires,
And ropes of oriental pearl; these seen, I could not
But look on gold with contempt. And yet I found,
What weak credulity could have no faith in,
A treasure far exceeding these: here lay
A manor bound fast in a skin of parchment,
The wax continuing hard, the acres melting;
Here a sure deed of gift for a market town
If not redeem'd this day, which is not in
The unthrift's power: there being scarce one shire
In Wales or England, where my moneys are not
Lent out at usury, the certain hook
To draw in more. I am sublimed! gross earth
Supports me not; I walk on air!——Who's there?

(*Enter lord Lacy, with Sir John Frugal, Sir Maurice Lacy, and Plenty, disguised as Indians*).

Thieves! raise the street! thieves!—Act 3. sc. 3.

It was a great effort by which such a train of violent emotions and beautiful images were drawn, with the strictest propriety, from the indulgence of a passion to which other poets can only give interest in its anxieties and disappointments. Every sentiment in this fine soliloquy, is touched with the hand of a master; the speaker, overcome by the splendor of his acquisition, can scarcely

Digitized by Google

persuade himself that the event is real: "It is no fantasy, but a truth; a real truth, no dream; he does not slumber;" the natural language of one who strives to convince himself that he is fortunate beyond all probable expectation; for, "he could wake ever to gaze upon his treasure." Again he reverts to his assurances: "it did endure the touch; he saw and felt it." These broken exclamations and anxious repetitions are the pure voice of nature. Recovering from his astonishment, his mind dilates with the value of his possessions; and the poet finely directs the whole gratitude of this mean character to the key of his stores. In the description which follows, there is a striking climax in sordid luxury. That passage where

> Each sparkling diamond from itself shot forth
> A pyramid of flames, and in the roof
> Fix'd it a glorious star, and made the place
> Heaven's abstract, or epitome!

though founded on a false idea in natural history, long since exploded, is amply excused by the singular and beautiful image which it presents. The contemplation of his enormous wealth, still amplified by his fancy, transports him at length to a degree of frenzy; and now seeing strangers approach, he cannot conceive them to come upon any design but that of robbing him; and with the appeasing of his ridiculous alarm this storm of passion subsides, which stands unrivalled in its kind, in dramatic history. The soliloquy possesses a very uncommon beauty, that of forcible description united with passion and character. I should scarcely hesitate to prefer the description of Sir John Frugal's countinghouse to Spenser's house of riches.

It is very remarkable, that in this passage, the versification is so exact, (two lines only excepted), and the diction so pure and elegant, that, although much more than a century has elapsed since it was written, it would be perhaps impossible to alter the measure or language without injury, and certainly very difficult to produce an equal length of blank verse, from any modern poet, which should bear a comparison with Massinger's, even in the mechanical part of its construction. This observation may be extended to all our poet's productions: majesty, elegance, and sweetness of diction predominate in them. It is needless to quote any single passage for proof of this, because none of those which I am going to intro-

Digitized by Google

duce will afford any exception to the remark. Independent of character, the writings of this great poet abound with noble passages. It is only in the productions of true poetical genius that we meet with successful allusions to sublime natural objects. The attempts of an inferior writer, in this kind, are either borrowed or disgusting. If Massinger were to be tried by this rule alone, we must rank him very high. A few instances will prove this. Theophilus, speaking of Diocletian's arrival, says

> The marches of great princes,
> Like to the motions of prodigious meteors,
> Are step by step observed.—Virgin Martyr, act 1. sc. 1.

The introductory circumstances of a threatening piece of intelligence, are

> But creeping billows,
> Not got to shore yet.—Id. act 2. sc. 2.

In the same play, we meet with this charming image, applied to a modest young nobleman:

> The sunbeams which the emperor throws upon him,
> Shine there but as in water, and gild him
> Not with one spot of pride.—Id. sc. 3.

No other figure could so happily illustrate the peace and purity of an ingenuous mind, uncorrupted by favour. Massinger seems fond of this thought. We meet with a similar one in the *Guardian*.

> I have seen those eyes with pleasant glances play
> Upon Adorio's, like Phœbe's shine,
> Gilding a crystal river.—Act 4. sc. 1.

There are two parallel passages in Shakspeare, to whom we are probably indebted for this, as well as for many other fine images of our poet. The first is in the *Winter's Tale:*

> He says he loves my daughter;
> I think so too; for never gaz'd the moon
> Upon the water, as he'll stand and read,
> As 'twere, my daughter's eyes.—Act 4. sc. 4.

The second is ludicrous:

> *King.* Vouchsafe, bright moon, and these thy stars to shine
> (Those clouds remov'd), upon our wat'ry eyne.

Digitized by Google

Ras. O vain petitioner! beg a greater matter;
Thou now request'st but moonshine in the water.
Love's Labour's Lost, act 5. sc. 2.

The following images are applied, I think in a new manner:

As the sun
Thou did'st rise gloriously, kept'st a constant course
In all thy journey; and now, in the evening,
When thou should'st pass with honour to thy rest,
Wilt thou fall like a meteor?—Virgin Martyr, act 5. sc. 2.

O summer friendship,
Whose flattering leaves that shadow'd us in our
Prosperity, with the least gust drop off
In the autumn of adversity.—Maid of Honour, act 3. sc. 1.

In the last quoted play, Cameola says, in perplexity,

What a sea
Of melting ice I walk on!—Act 3. sc. 4.

A very noble figure, in the following passage, seems to be borrowed from Shakspeare:

What a bridge
Of glass I walk upon, over a river
Of certain ruin, *mine own weighty fears*
Cracking what should support me!
The Bondman, act 4. sc. 3.

I'll read you matter deep and dangerous;
As full of peril and advent'rous spirit
As to o'er-walk a current, roaring loud,
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.
Henry 4, part 1. act 1. sc. 3.

It cannot be denied that Massinger has improved on his original: he cannot be said to borrow, so properly as to imitate. This remark may be applied to many other passages: thus Harpax's menace,

I'll take thee,—and hang thee
In a contorted chain of isicles
In the frigid zone.—The Virgin Martyr, act 5. sc. 1.

Is derived from the same source with that passage in *Measure for Measure*, where it is said to be a punishment in a future state,

To reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice.

Digitized by Google

Again, in the *Old Law*, we meet with a passage similar to a much celebrated one of Shakspeare's, but copied with no common hand:

In my youth
I was a soldier, no coward in my age;
I never turn'd my back upon my foe;
I have felt nature's winters, sicknesses,
Yet ever kept a lively sap in me
To greet the cheerful spring of health again.
Act 1. sc. 1.

Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors to my blood;
Nor did I with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility;
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty but kindly.*—As you Like It, act 2. sc. 3.

(To be continued.)

MEMOIRS OF MARSHAL RANTZAU.

MARSHAL RANTZAU.—"He was a German of high birth, and a general of such great note, that Mazarin used to oppose him to the prince of Condé, when that great commander had the misfortune to be in arms against his country and his prince." M. Rantzau possessed admirable qualities both of body and mind. He was tall, fair, and very handsome. To see him only, one would say he was born to command. He was the finest horseman ever beheld. He would hit a single piece of money with a pistol, at a hundred paces distant. He was invincible with the small sword. He spoke the principal languages of Europe, and had a general taste for the sciences. He was acquainted with all the great generals of the age; having made war under them from the time he was able to

* In an expression of Archidamas, in the *Bondman*, we discover, perhaps, the origin of an image in *Paradise Lost:*

O'er our heads, with sail-stretch'd wings,
Destruction hovers.—The Bondman, act 1. sc. 3.

Milton says of Satan,

His sail broad vanne
He spreads for flight.

Digitized by Google

bear arms. He said in conversation many lively things; and as an infallible proof of the force of his eloquence, in any council of war in which he ever sat, he always drew over the other members to be of his sentiments; so ably did he support them with powerful reasons. If he spoke well, he wrote still better. To his courage nothing was impossible. He possessed perfect coolness in the greatest danger, and found expedients under the heaviest misfortunes. His liberality procured him the love and esteem of his soldiers, and no general knew how to give his orders so well. But so many excellent and rare virtues were effaced by his great vices. Never was there a more determined debauchee. He loved wine and women to excess; and the most seasoned drinkers were afraid of him. He sought their company from all parts, and no one could equal him in this species of vice. He sometimes remained in a state of insensibility for whole days. The disorder that reigned in his private affairs was inconceivable. He gave away whatever he had about him without discrimination; and he always had much money in his pocket, which he was robbed of during his inebriety. Thus, like a cask without a bottom, all the riches of India would not have been sufficient for him; and he found himself compelled to sell all his effects for little or nothing. He often lost his best friends for a bon-mot. Du Maurier, who was Ranzau's great friend, told this extraordinary man one day, that his excesses and irregularities would destroy his health; and that they would prevent his rising to the principal employments in the state. "I would not," answered he, darting a most ferocious and hagard look upon Du Maurier, "I would not give up my pleasures to become emperor of Germany." His excesses, during the siege of Dunkirk by the Spaniards, are thought to have lost that place. He was, however, confined for some time in the castle of Vincennes for this supposed neglect, and was cleared from any imputation of treachery or cowardice. He died soon after his release. During the siege of Gravelines he one day appointed the duke of Orleans, and some of the principal French nobility, to sup with him. He went, however, in the morning, to pay a visit to the famous Dutch admiral Van Tromp, where he got so drunk with Malaga wine, that he fell under the table as if he was dead, and was obliged to be put to bed. His aid-du-camp made an apology to the duke of Orleans, for his master's not being able to attend him at supper, and put it upon an excessive swell of the sea, which had prevented his leaving the admiral's ship.

Digitized by Google

To show the dangers of ebriety, the catholic legends tell us of some of their hermits to whom the devil gave his choice of three crimes: two of them of the most atrocious kind; and the other to be drunk. The poor saint chose the last, as the least of the three; but when drunk, committed the other two.

The baneful effects of this pernicious vice upon the body are described by Dr. Darwin, in his "Zoonomia," under an allegory which would not have disgraced the splendid imagination of lord Bacon himself.

"Prometheus," says the doctor, "was painted, as stealing fire from heaven, that might well represent the inflammable spirit, produced by fermentation, which may be said to animate or enliven the man of clay; whence the conquests of Bacchus, as well as the temporary mirth and noise of his devotees. But, the after punishment of those who steal this accursed fire, is a vulture gnawing the liver; and well allegorizes the poor inebriate, lingering for years under painful diseases."

And, that the graces and energies of poetry may come in aid of the figure, so strongly depicted in prose; the same great physiologist, in his "Botanic Garden," in the most sublime imagery, and with the greatest strength of personification, has composed a picture, which should be painted and hung up in every chamber dedicated to Bacchanalian festivity.

Dr. Darwin personifies the goddess of wine, under the name of Vitis, who thus addresses her votaries,

"Drink deep, sweet youth," seductive Vitis cries,
The maudlin teardrop glistening in her eyes;
Green leaves and purple clusters crown her head,
And the tall thyrsus stays her tott'ring tread:
"Drink deep," she carols as she waves in air
The mantling gobblet, "and forget your care."
O'er the dread feast malignant Chymia scowls,
And mingles poison in the nectar'd bowls.
Fell Gout peeps grinning thro' the flimsy scene,
And bloated Dropsy keeps behind unseen.
Wrapp'd in her robe, while Lepra hides her stains,
And silent Frenzy, writhing, bites his chains.

Digitized by Google

A CURIOUS LETTER FROM YATES THE CELEBRATED COMEDIAN, TO THE EDITOR OF A BRITISH PUBLICATION.

SIR,

THOUGH it is not my profession to write, but to retail the writings of others, yet I find the spirit move me to hazard some observations, on a very goodhumored, sprightly, elegant paragraph, in your paper of yesterday.

The facetious gentleman is pleased to say, that *Yates and his wife* have retired from the stage, with thirty-six thousand pound, or forty thousand pound; and that they are remarkable for their *comely* appearance; though one is, from theatrical dates, seventy, the other above sixty years of age. 'Tis wonderful, so wise a man should be mistaken, but the facts are,

They have not retired with 40,000*l.*

They have not retired *at all.*

Theatrical dates *do not* prove them to be, the one seventy, the other more than sixty years of age.

In respect to myself; that I am remarkable for my *comely* appearance; that I can, though not worth *quite* forty thousand pound, eat my mutton without an engagement, and yet owe no man any thing; are offences to which I am ready to plead guilty: if comeliness is a sin, heaven help me, I say! and as to owing no man any thing, in these days, when it is the genteelest thing in the world, to *pay* no man any thing, I must e'en stand trial before a jury of honest tradesmen, who I dare say will acquit me, from the singularity of the case.

In respect to theatrical dates, I have, to be sure, told the chimes at midnight, some five and thirty years ago, which as I find myself just as healthy and alert, as in those delightful days, I do not think at all disqualifies me for my general cast of characters, in which I have pleased as good judges as your correspondent; nor is it absolutely necessary that the Miser, Fondlewife, Gomez, Don Manuel, Sir Wilful Witwou'd, &c. &c. should have the first down of a beard on their chins; but I will whisper something in the gentleman's ear, that whilst such writers as he are allowed to assassinate honest people in the dark, by abusive anonymous paragraphs, nobody that has mutton to eat will look out for theatrical engagements, but quietly let the stage fall into that happy state,

"When one Egyptian darkness covers all."

So much for myself, and now for Mrs. Yates.

Digitized by Google

That she is a pretty enough actress, as times go, and by no means uncomely, I willingly allow; but that she is more than sixty, or will be these dozen years at least, may bear something of a doubt.

As her first appearance was on Drury Lane stage, and in the full meredian of its glory, the date is easily ascertained; but to save the gentleman trouble, as he seems to be a bad calculator, I will inform him, it was in Mr. Crisp's Virginia, in the year 1754, (twenty-nine years ago), and that she was then as pretty a plump rosy Hebe, as one shall see on a summer's day.

She had the honour (an honour never conferred on any other person), of being introduced, as a young beginner by a prologue written, and spoken, by that *great master*, *Mr. Garrick*, in which the following lines are to the present purpose:

"If novelties can please, to night we've two—
Tho' English both, yet spare 'em as they're new—
To one at least, your usual favour show—
A female asks it; can a man say No?
Should you indulge our novice yet unseen,
And crown her with your hands a tragic queen:
Should you with smiles a confidence impart,
To calm those fears which speak a feeling heart,
Assist each struggle of ingenuous shame,
Which curbs a genius in its road to fame;
With one wish more her whole ambition ends—
She hopes some merit, to deserve such friends."

And now give me leave, Sir, to tell your correspondent a story: On the first coming to England of Signor Trebbi, a worthy gentleman, the editor of a newspaper paid him a morning visit, and informed him, he was a public writer, and had characters of all prices. "I understand you, Sir," said Trebbi, "and have heard of you: I have no guineas to throw away so ill; but I am a writer too; Et voila ma plume!" "This is my pen," showing him a good English oaken towel. Signor Trebbi was so good as to leave me *his pen*, the only one I shall make use of against malevolence in future, where the writer does me the honour of making himself known to me. I am, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

RICHARD YATES.

Digitized by Google

CHARACTER OF FOOTE, BY MR. GAHAGAN.

FOOTE was a very extraordinary man, and had talents which he abused. He abounded in wit, humor and sense; but he was so fond of detraction and mimicking, that he might properly be called a buffoon; and they were a great blemish in his conversation, though he entertained you. He was generally civil to your face, and seldom put you out of humor with yourself; but you paid for his civility the moment you turned your back, and were sure of being made ridiculous. He was not so malignant as some I have known, but his excessive vanity led him into satire and ridicule. He was vain of his classical knowledge (which was but superficial) and of his family, and used to boast of his numerous relations in the west of England. He was most extravagant and baubling, but not generous. He delighted in buying rings, snuff boxes, and toys, which were a great expense to him; and he lost money at play, and was a dupe, with all his parts. He loved wine, and good living, and was a mighty pretender to skill in cookery, though he did not understand a table as well as he thought; he affected to like distinguished dishes and ragouts, and could not bear to eat plain beef or mutton, which showed he had a depraved appetite; he spared no expense in his dinners, and his wine was good. He was very disgusting in his manner of eating, and not clean in his person; but he was so pleasant, and had such a flow of spirits, that his faults and foibles were overlooked. He always took the lead in company, and was the chief or sole performer. He had such a rage for shining, and such an itch for applause, that he often brought to my mind Pope's lines on the duke of Wharton:

> "Though senates hung on all he spoke
> The mob must hail him master of the joke."

He loved lords' company, though he gave himself airs of despising them, and treating them cavalierly. He was licentious and sensual, made a jest of religion and morality, and of all worthy men. He told a story pleasantly, and added many circumstances of his own invention, to heighten it. He had a good choice of words, and apt expressions, and could speak very well upon grave subjects; but he soon grew tired of serious conversation, and returned naturally to his favourite amusement, mimicry, in which he did not excel; for he drew caricatures by which he made you

Digitized by Google

laugh more than a closer mimic. He was a coarse actor, yet he played the parts in his own plays, better than any who have appeared in them since his death; for instance, *Major Sturgeon*, *Aircastle*, *Cadwallader*, &c.

He had a flat vulgar face, without expression; but when a part was strongly ridiculous, he succeeded, for he always ran into farce; so that I have been often surfeited with him on the stage, and never wished to see him twice, in the same character. Though he wanted simplicity in his acting, yet he was a very good judge of the stage; but so unfair, and so disposed to criticise, that you could not depend on his opinion.

As a writer he certainly had merit, and afforded great entertainment to the town for many years: If he had taken more pains in finishing his pieces, they would have been equal to most of our comedies; but he was too indolent, and too idle, to carry them to perfection.

Upon the whole, his life and character would furnish a subject for a good farce, with an instructive moral. It would show that parts alone are of little use, without prudence or virtue: and that flashes of wit and humor, give only a momentary pleasure; but no solid entertainment.

Digitized by Google

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

THEATRICAL JOURNAL.

For January, 1811.

1	Tuesday 1st,	Columbus, with the Prisoner at Large.
2	Wednesday 2d,	Cure for the Heart Ache, and Raising of the Wind; (for the benefit of the sufferers at Charleston.)
3	Friday 4th,	Stranger, and Tom Thumb.
4	Saturday 5th,	Columbus, and Deaf Lover.
5	Monday 7th,	School for Scandal, and the Prize.
6	Wednesday 9th,	Julia, or the Italian Lover, and Hit or Miss.
7	Friday 11th,	Hamlet, and the Ghost.
8	Saturday 12th,	Columbus, and Who's the Dupe?
9	Monday 14th,	Venice Preserved, with Catharine and Petruchio.
10	Wednesday 16th,	Roman Father, with Ways and Means.
11	Friday 18th,	The Revenge, and the Blind Boy.
12	Saturday 19th,	Foundling of the Forest, with My Grandmother.
13	Monday 21st,	King Lear, and Catch him Who Can.
14	Wednesday 23d,	Douglas, with Sylvester Daggerwood and Hunter of the Alps.
15	Friday 25th,	Provoked Husband, and Love laughs at Locksmiths.
16	Saturday 26th,	Columbus, and the Weathercock.
17	Monday 28th,	Macbeth, and the Spoil'd Child.
18	Wednesday 30th,	Pizarro, and Budget of Blunders.

MRS. BEAUMONT'S PERFORMANCE CONTINUED.

THE GRECIAN DAUGHTER.

"THE tragedy of the Grecian Daughter has, from its first appearance on the stage, had more success, and received stronger marks of public approbation than some plays which better deserve them. Closet criticism, however, has treated it with more rigid justice than the auditors at the playhouse, and made the author refund a part of the surplus of credit which his play received on the stage. That, in common with all Mr. Murphy's dramatic pieces, it has weighty, sterling merit; that it is replete with poetical beauties, couched in language bold, animated, and energetic, yet suffi-

Digitized by Google

ciently smooth and mellifluous; and that the pathetic, the martial, and the heroic are skilfully blended in the general texture of the action, cannot be denied. But in the appropriation of their several qualities to the leading characters of the piece, there is a transposition contrary to the usual course of nature, for which it is difficult to account, when we consider that Mr. Murphy was no less remarkable for a refined taste and a severe judgment, than for the comprehensive power and versatility of his genius. If it was his object to evince his skill in executing difficulties, to show how far genius could reconcile incongruities, and to give an imposing air of probability to incidents, which, though they should have happened, are so much out of the course of human things, that they must be considered as exceptions to nature's general march, Mr. Murphy has certainly succeeded to admiration.

For our own parts, we are free to avow, that the tragedy of the Grecian Daughter never had charms for us: for even when it was supported by the matchless excellence of the celebrated BARRY in Evander; in which character he was, as Murphy says, "the finest feeble venerable old man that imagination can figure to itself," and of Mrs. Barry, in Euphrasia, there was something in it with which we could not bring our feelings to correspond. Nor was this repugnance the result of critical judgment (for it was in our boyish days) but of natural feeling, which, in such cases, generally precedes the decisions of the understanding, and very much exceeds them in value. In the present instance, we have found the sentence of our youthful feelings confirmed by the decision of our maturer judgment, which, at the same time, enables us to account for opinions we were then not capable nor indeed desirous to analyze.

The fact is, that the tale, upon which the Grecian Daughter is founded, though it be popular, and, in its proper place, sufficiently affecting, and though it were even true in point of fact, has so much the air of those ancient cock-and-a-bull stories, with which old women relieve the tedium of long winter evenings, or amuse children, that we could not help revolting from it as a subject for tragedy. A nursery tale is but a sorry subject for heroics; and that may surely be called a nursery business of which the principal male character is placed, even in the important and pathetic circumstance on which the plot hinges, in the state of a newly born infant; while on the other hand the heroine, to whom all the timid delicacies, all "the winning softness of the sex," and all the feminine ten-

Digitized by Google

dernesses should belong, is made to usurp the man's office, and to do an act which the boldest ruffian ought to shudder but to think of.

But while natural sentiment revolts from these two incidents, critical judgment confesses its astonishment at the conduct and general execution of the whole drama; for assuredly nothing but the most masterly execution could, on such a fable, have raised a fabric to the high rank which this tragedy holds as an acting play. The filial piety of Euphrasia is emphatically marked through every line of her character. In her refusing to accompany a beloved husband, ("*her brave and generous* PHOCION") and her blooming boy, in their flight, and staying behind them at Syracuse to attend her father,

> "To watch his fate, to visit his affliction,
> To cheer his prison hours, and with the tear
> Of filial virtue bid e'en bondage smile."

In her tending that father; in her struggles to beguile the rage of Dionysius, by "casting o'er her sorrows a dawn of gladness," and in her hazardous enterprises to save her parent and destroy the tyrant, the author has exerted himself with such force and skill, that it would seem as if he was aware of the ticklish nature of the story he had adopted, and had resolved to bring the character of Euphrasia home to the heart with such an abundance of loftiness, and such a multiplicity of splendid and dignified circumstances, as could not fail to blend down, and secure from too curious and undivided attention, the littleness of the main incident. Mr. Murphy well knew that the world held in the very first rank of approbation the charms of filial piety, and judiciously trusted to it for the success of his work. How irresistibly has he made Euphrasia lay claim to admiration and sympathy in the following lines.

> "Till that sad close of all, the task be mine
> To tend a father with delighted care,
> To smooth the pillow of declining age,
> See him sink gradual into mere decay,
> On the last verge of life watch every look,
> Explode each fond unutterable wish,
> Catch his last breath, and close his eyes in peace."

So intent is the author upon making a deep impression of his heroine's filial piety, that in almost every speech she utters, re-

Digitized by Google

currence is made to her father as the leading, if not exclusive object of her thoughts. Even to the tyrant she says,

" O let me then, in mercy, let me seek
The gloomy mansion where my father dwells:
I die content, if in his arms I perish."

And again,

" Oh while yet he lives,
Indulge a daughter's love; worn out with age,
Soon must he seal his eyes in endless night,
And with his converse charm my ear no more."

On the other hand, the general merit of the poetry is here and there lessened by bloated speeches " full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," and by declamation, pompous enough to excite a smile. Euphrasia's frequent addresses to her VIRGINS too, we remember to have originally occasioned a titter among the gods in Dublin, even when the words were uttered by Mrs. Barry; for whose performance of the character, Garrick made her a present of a farce he had just then written, called " The Irish Widow." Mr. Murphy records this in his life of Garrick, and says that Mrs. Barry " towered above herself in Euphrasia," then candidly ascribes the uncommon success of the play to the performance of her and her husband, and adds, " It is owing to Mrs. SIDDONS that the Grecian Daughter has not sunk into oblivion: she restored it to the stage, in nothing inferior to Mrs. BARRY, and in some scenes superior."

Though Mr. Murphy has pretty generally sacrificed the other characters to the glories of Euphrasia, they are not all without some valuable speeches. The description given by Dionysius of the miseries attendant upon sovereignty is alike forcible and true; and enough to deter any, but the devoted of God, from the thorny paths of ambition and tyranny.

Oh! Philotas,
Thou little know'st the cares, the pangs of empire.
The ermined pride, the purple that adorns
A conqueror's breast, but serves, my friend, to hide
A heart that's torn, that's mangled with remorse.
Each object round me wakens horrid doubts;
The flattering train, the sentinel that guards me,
The slave that waits, all give some new alarm;
And from the means of safety, dangers rise.
E'en victory itself plants anguish here;
And round my laurels the fell serpent twines.

Digitized by Google

In the character of Euphrasia, Mrs. Beaumont made a more successful appeal to the judgment of her audience than in Isabella, and indeed to their feelings also, deserving, as she received, much more unalloyed applause. There being less whining and more energy in the character, it was in itself more agreeable to the audience, and afforded her fewer occasions of falling into the *sing-song ditty-drawl speechification* that so wofully disfigures modern scenic representation, and is one of the faults which detract from Mrs. Beaumont's general powers of impression. In the Grecian Daughter there was less of overacting; less uncouth motion of the head; less, indeed much less, of objectionable action; and at the same time, a more constant and far more perfect display of powerful natural talent. On the former occasion we hazarded an assertion, that tenderness and pathos constituted Mrs. Beaumont's forte: not meaning to resign that opinion, we must say that they do not *exclusively* form her excellence. We scarcely know a feature in the character of Euphrasia which she did not occasionally delineate with success. Her tenderness was mixed with dignity: it was of a higher order, more lovely and more decorous than that of her Isabella. Her grief was more impressive and alarming, while her indignation (the great moving principle upon which the catastrophe of the tragedy turns) was by no means deficient in awfulness. No one can understand the author's design better. Every line, therefore, (with some inconsiderable exceptions) told; and her business, particularly in the scene when she stabs the tyrant, was excellent. In fine, Mrs. Beaumont, in Euphrasia, though not a Barry or a Siddons, is much better than any actress we have a chance of seeing on this side of the Atlantic, unless the example of Cooke shall have infected one or two of the first actresses in England with the itch of migration. The epilogue was delivered with force and spirit; but with a little too much of the latter, and too much action and locomotion. Mrs. Beaumont frequently reminded us, this evening, of Mrs. Whitlock.

In Evander, Warren was, altogether, respectable: in some passages he displayed considerable pathos. His figure, however, is rather against him for this old Grecian; when he pathetically enough said

> Oh! my heart,
> Alas! quite worn; worn out with misery;
> Oh! weak, decayed old man!

Digitized by Google

we could not help thinking that "*he did not quite look the thing.*"

Philotas is not enough for Wood. But he made the most of it.

For such characters as Dionysius M'Kenzie seems formed. The merit of understanding his author (and a great and rare one it is) criticism has not often cause to deny to Mr. M'Kenzie. The tyrant of Syracuse he conceives well, and executes as well as he conceives. The terrors of his deep and hollow voice, which, in such characters as this, are peculiarly useful to him, unfit him for the personification of others, for which he has a sufficiency of other requisites.

The Highland Reel followed; in which Jefferson did much more justice to Shelty than in the Sultan he did to Osmyn.

Looking over our journal, we find that the next character in which Mrs. Beaumont offers herself for critical examination, is that of Madam Clermont, in *Adrian and Orrilla*, or a *Mother's Vengeance.*

Of Mrs. Beaumont's Madam Clermont we had heard much in praise from persons on whose judgment we placed much reliance; and we confess that we were not disappointed. In one place excepted, we did not remark the least of that extravagant action, to which we so much regret our being obliged to advert. This play has been so often acted, and every line and character of it is by this time so familiar to the public, that it would be a waste of time and print to enter into an analysis of it, or to speak of the actors, of whom we have already said all that it is needful to say. Mrs. Wood lost, in the revolutions of the past recess, nothing of her interest and charms in Orrilla.

To the play succeeded the old afterpiece of the Citizen, written by Arthur Murphy, the author of the Grecian Daughter, &c., and now brought forward to exhibit Mrs. Beaumont in the lively character of Maria; in which she proved that she possesses a rich vein of comic humor, independent of grimace and buffoonery; bad habits, for which our popular comedians, with few exceptions, stand in the heavy censure of criticism. In Maria she was really comical; and in her management of the trick played off on young Philpot, to deter him from marrying her, did her business with skill. Jefferson was as usual *extravagantly* funny in the young citizen; and Warren, in the old father, by being much more chaste, was more truly comic than either of them.

Digitized by Google

Indisposition, to our great regret as well as pain, prevented us from seeing Mrs. Beaumont in Letitia Hardy, in the Belle's Stratagem. From several quarters, however, we learned, and it costs us nothing to believe it, that the sprightly Belle was indebted to her for many beauties. In Ella Rosenberg, however, which she played after Letitia, the praise bestowed upon her performance is much more absolute and unmixed. It has been represented as a *chef-d'œuvre* of histrionism. Our informants we know are warm admirers of Mrs. Beaumont's acting: yet we confide in their assertion. Upon the same authority we rely so much, that we venture to affirm (*on sight unseen* as they say) that much also may be said in praise of Warren's Hardy.

We must here drop Mrs. Beaumont till our next number, in order to announce that the managers have in rehearsal two new pieces: one a new comedy, called "The DOUBTFUL SON," the other a tragedy, intitled "DE MONFORT." As an analysis of a new piece must be more pleasing and useful to readers before than after representation, we employ the first means that present themselves of giving a short account of these two productions, and first of the comedy of

THE DOUBTFUL SON.

Mr. Diamond, to whom the public already stand indebted for several dramatic productions, viz. "The Hero of the North," "The Hunter of the Alps," "Adrian and Orrilla," and "The Foundling of the Forest," is the author of this piece, which was, for the first time, performed during the last summer at the Haymarket theatre in London. The plot is briefly as follows.

Alfonso, marquis of Lerida, a high Spanish nobleman, having at a very early age married Victoria, the only child and heiress of an ancient, opulent, and noble family of Spain, had in a short time after their nuptials gone off to South America, to take upon him the office of governor of Mexico, to which he had been then recently appointed, and left his wife, the marchioness, behind him in a state of pregnancy. It appears from circumstances disclosed in the play, that a considerable time antecedent to her union with the marquis, Victoria had been clandestinely married to a young military officer, who resided as a dependent in her father's palace; and who, being ordered with his corps against the Moors, was killed by them in battle. This first marriage of hers remained concealed from the father, till the birth of a son disclosed to him the

Digitized by Google

secret. The marquis of Lerida having in the mean time fallen in love with Victoria, having no conception of her private connexion, and not at all suspecting her to be a mother or a wife, had demanded her in marriage; to which her father, without consulting her inclinations or asking her acquiescence, had immediately agreed. Upon the discovery of her marriage, the father's anger being appeased by the death of her husband, and the prospect of repairing the injury by joining his widowed daughter to the marquis, he resolved carefully to conceal the secret, took the child from her, sent it to nurse in a peasant's cottage in the Pyrenean mountains, and by violent threats and denunciations, which kept her in apprehension for the safety of her babe's life, induced her to give a reluctant consent to marry the marquis of Lerida, who was all along kept in profound ignorance of her real situation.

No sooner had the marquis departed for Mexico than she, resolving to see her infant, the darling fruit of her first marriage and only love, set out on a visit to the hut in the Pyrenees where it was kept; and during her journey, sinking under the pressure of anxiety and fatigue, fell into premature labour, and was delivered of an infant which immediately died. In the confusion and distress attendant on this accident, she listened to the counsel of her attendant Floribel, whose fidelity she had long proved, and, on her suggestion, substituted Leon, her child by her first husband, in the place of the deceased infant, and thus accomplished the twofold purpose of concealing her untoward accident, and placing the child of her heart not only in her own house but in the ultimate inheritance of a splendid title and an immense estate. In order to give full effect to her plan, and secure it completely from detection, she continued to travel till the disparity of age, between the living infant and the dead one, became wholly imperceptible; and on the marquis's return from South America, she presented Leon to him as his son; in which character the unsuspecting nobleman brought him up and educated him. In the mean time the marquis having, by an illicit connexion with a Mexican lady, had a daughter named Rosaviva, of which he resolved to take care, brought her over to old Spain with him as a child intrusted to his guardianship by a deceased friend, and keeping her in his palace educated her as his ward. Between this young lady and Leon a strong attachment had taken place.

Thus things stand at the palace of Lerida in Madrid when the

Digitized by Google

play commences; at which crisis the marquis has for some time had information that LEON was not his child. His grief preys upon his health, and his indignation is inflamed to fury by the artifices of a wicked wretch of the name of MALVOGLI, a Portuguese by birth, whom he entertains about him as a private secretary. This villain, raised from the lowest and most obscure condition by the marquis's bounty, but indued with uncommon subtlety in concealing the worst passions and the most guilty purposes under the plausible appearance of gratitude, zeal, and fidelity, has contrived not only to insinuate himself into the unlimited confidence of his patron the marquis, but to worm himself into the favour and good opinion of the lady, and to manage her with such address as to cajole her out of the great important secret of her life, or in other words to obtain from her a full discovery of her former connexion, and of the real parentage of Leon.

Having armed himself for his mischievous plan of operations in this subtle and treacherous manner, he proceeds with his design; which is to persuade the marquis to give him the hand of Rosaviva, and to settle his estate upon them on the marriage. To this end he at once inflames the jealousy of the marquis, informs Leon privately that Rosaviva is his sister, and terrifies the marchioness from revealing to her husband the whole truth respecting her first connexion and the birth of Leon; and while he thus artfully plays upon the credulity of each, succeeds in his scheme so far that he obtains the marquis's consent to his marriage with Rosaviva, together with an entire surrender of the castle of Lerida and all his estates, to the complete disinherizon of Leon; contracts are even signed to the effect, and anxiety and apprehension are wound up to a painful pitch for the fate of the family, when there appears at the castle a stranger of the most extraordinary dark and terrible character, who all at once discloses that he holds a secret and unaccountable power over the villain Malvogli: some mysterious authority, which he exercises with an effect that cannot be resisted. This fellow, whose name is Borrachio, had been long it appears an associate in guilt and deeds of darkness with Malvogli, whose real name is Ruffaldi; and he developes a whole train of villany in which they were both confederated. In consequence of this discovery the marriage of Rosaviva is prevented; the marchioness is restored to the good opinion, the confidence, and the affection of her husband; and Leon receives the hand of Rosaviva from the marquis.

Digitized by Google

Respecting the merits of this composition, criticism is reduced to the same state of unwilling acquiescence in the prevailing taste of the times, it is so often called upon to exercise in giving judgment upon most of the productions of fancy, whether novel, romance, or drama, which now inundate Great Britain. All that can be said in favour of this whole class of compositions is that the authors write and make money by them; that the people are pleased to receive them; and that the critic must take them as they come, whether he will or no. Of the Doubtful Son, however, it may be asserted, that though the kind be not good, it is tolerably good of the kind. Mrs. Radcliffe, Mr. Matthew Lewis, and Co. have amused (the former indeed delighted) the world; but, to borrow an expression of Falstaff's, they have also done it much harm. A faithful picture of nature, in which man is portrayed as he is really found in the probable course of life, will not now be looked at. If a fable be constructed without romance, horrors, and awe-inspiring mystery, it is "*caviere* to the multitude." Aware of the perverted taste of the public, and perhaps convinced of its depravity, Mr. Diamond displays in all his pieces the most consummate skill in catering for it. No writer can more successfully agitate the feelings by a mysterious involution of fable, ingulf the mind in more dark and dread suspense, by the black art of the pen, make a more dismal cauldron of wo rise in the obscurity of the back ground, or sink it again with greater dexterity. In his plays we find not a trace of legitimate comedy; no mirror held up to nature or to man; no delineation of manners; no just portraiture of the human character; none of the probabilities of life; but, on the contrary, a series of romance in dialogue, in which possibility is urged to its extremest verge.

In the play before us, what is offered? Let us only imagine a person, just arrived from Germany and relating it in a mixed company, and consider what every one would think of his veracity or his understanding. One family of no more than six persons, connected to each other by the ordinary domestic ties, and without more reasonable means or motives to go aside than people in domestic life can be supposed to have, are involved in as many secret plots and mysteries, perplexed with as many intricacies, and surrounded with as many snares, in one drama, as the police of the blackest Italian republic; nay, of Venice itself, with its bravoes and its lazaroni, and its canals and gondolas to aid their subtleties,

Digitized by Google

ever brought to light in a whole year. The husband has an illegitimate child and a mystery; the wife another child and another mystery; and the husband gives in marriage his mysterious child, which the unravelling of her mystery shows to be the offspring of an adulterous intercourse, to the mysterious child of his wife; and the poor mother sees her good son tied to the fruits of the adulterous wrong offered to her insulted bed. Thus the relations of parent and child and of husband and wife are perplexed; and thus right and wrong, vice and virtue, marquises and secretaries, servants and masters, are made to dance the hayes, cross over, change places, and right and left with each other, till such a cloud of romantic dust and horrible obscurity is raised, that nothing is visible to the moral or critical eye, until it answers the purpose of the author to dispel it; when, with a *presto pass and begone*, the audience are told, and that by the characters themselves, that all matters are settled to satisfaction, that all doubts are at an end; and that all the embarrassments and intricacies have, during the fog, been disintangled. As usual, the villain is detected and sent off; as usual, a reconciliation of all quarrels takes place; and, as usual, the young people are married; and the denouement, of course, is very pleasing and very natural.

Yet this stuff of the imagination, collected from the murky realms of the newfangled romance, is so constructed (and that is the worst of it, because it perpetuates the contagion) as to excite and keep alive, from beginning to end, considerable interest. If we must have dramatic romances instead of plays, however, we shall be content with Mr. Diamond's mode of managing them. Improbable as the incidents of this piece are, and stained as it is in one case by avowed immorality, the action is conducted with much art; the succession of events is unforced and orderly; and the development, though somewhat huddled up, is pleasing. We entertain very little doubt of its success in representation; and we should be wanting in candor if we omitted to say, that, when compared with its fellow travellers through the shortlived existence allotted them by their nature, it deserves some praise. That it should come to this, however, with the British drama, so grieves us, that we cannot help breathing forth our regrets, and saying with Ophelia,

Ah! wo is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see.

Digitized by Google

DE MONFORT,

A TRAGEDY, BY JOANNA BAILLIE.

Beside the tragedy of De Monfort, this lady has added to the mass of English poetry a number of plays which deserve the best efforts of criticism in their eulogy and illustration, on account of the originality of their design, and the peculiar beauty and vigor of their execution. Her avowed object is to delineate the stronger passions of the mind. In accomplishing this, she does not, as is usual, take the passion intended to be delineated, at its full grown height, but begins with it at its inchoate state—not in the maturation of the fruit, but in the heart's first reception of the seed; from which she traces it, step by step, in its rise and its progress, up to its ultimate pernicious effects. A conception so great, bold and original, could be the growth of no other than a mind abundantly enriched by nature with genius, fertilized by the best culture, and invigorated by a just confidence in its own resources for the means of carrying so vast a plan into execution. The passion she has chosen to investigate in the tragedy of De Monfort is that of Hatred: how far she has succeeded in her management of the subject, it is our present business to inquire.

Hatred is, unfortunately, so common a feeling, and has furnished so many dramatists, epic poets and essayists with topics for excitation, that it may, at first view, appear little capable of novelty; and so it really would be in ordinary hands; but in those of a person of real genius, nothing appears commonplace: if the thought be old, his pencil portrays it in a new and captivating attitude, and presents it in a rich drapery, the novelty of which makes it original and his own. Thus Miss Baillie has, in De Monfort, contrived to render one of the most familiar and vulgar passions novel, striking and original, not only by forming the general disposition of the person who entertains it a contrast to the character of the passion itself, but by making it apparently disproportionate to the motives which influence him and the hatred he entertains. Effects of the most stupendous, frightful and criminal magnitude are produced; and when the causes are sought for, they are found so diminutive as scarcely to be visible to the naked eye. Nor is this done for the purpose of mystery—that miserable device of modern dramatists; for there is no concealment. From the outset, the hatred is perceptible and the cause is seen in the germ; but to the dim eye it ap-

Digitized by Google

pears for a while so little adequate to the effect, that the mind disowns its competency, and looks for something more. At first the passion, like the breeze that passes over the smooth surface of a becalmed water, barely ruffles his bosom; but soon it grows to a gale—from the gale it swells into a storm—from the storm to the tempest, and rages till every opposing barrier of virtue is swept away in a whirlwind of fury. And here it is that we ought to dwell upon the great superiority of the author of De Monfort to all dramatic poets of our day, in the great primary essential of moral purpose and effect; holding out to parents, as she does in the character of De Monfort, the most salutary admonition they can possibly receive for the training up of their children in the way that they should go. Shakspeare shows us the danger of ambition, the mischiefs of jealousy, the hatefulness as well as folly of revenge, in his Richard, Macbeth, Othello, and Shylock; but he does not point out how and when they are to be prevented; he does not, like our present subject, lay bare the root, and show where to direct the axe. Miss Baillie, in De Monfort, inculcates this moral truth, kill the vice in its first seeds—destroy it in the germ; for if once it gains a living lodgment in the heart, it will hold a perpetual despotic dominion over it. Treat it, therefore,

> As a serpent's egg,
> Which, hatch'd, would as its kind, grow mischievous,
> And kill it in the shell.

She does more: by endowing with the noblest virtues, particularly with generosity, honour, and benevolence, the man who becomes a prey to so detestable a passion, she holds out an awful warning to mankind not to consider any imaginable portion of virtue a sufficient security against a bad passion, if it be once suffered to get rule in the heart, and gives a terrible example of the fatal effects of an overweening confidence in our own vigilance and resolution.

By her efforts to produce this excellent moral lesson, our admirable authoress has thrown many difficulties in her own way. The fundamental passion of the Iliad is the anger of Achilles: but Achilles is complexionally irascible and furious—*ferox*, *iracundus*, *acer*. His provocations too are such as justify some degree of resentment, and, being at the very outset made known, they throw a light on the subject, so that there is no semblance of incongruity between cause and effect, no disproportion to be reconciled. The same may be said of Richard, Macbeth, &c., in which Shakspeare at once plunges *in*

Digitized by Google

medias res, and leaves nothing for conjecture or doubt: but in De Monfort, we have a man who yields to a vice seemingly in direct violation of the general composition of his nature and upon a provocation apparently too trifling to excite serious resentment; a man who, though naturally amiable and benevolent, nourishes in his bosom one of the most detestable passions than can deform human nature; while convinced, nay ashamed of its turpitude, indulges it even to the perpetration of murder, and becomes an assassin; and then, in the excessive sensibility of his nature, immolates himself, and dies of horror at the ruin he has made.

Such is the character and conduct of De Monfort, as it appears to the careless eye, in naked abstraction: but if we follow the author, step by step, through the detail of her hero's feelings, as she traces them from the original cause to the fatal effect, and at the same time take along with us a reasonable knowledge of our common nature, or if, as Shakspeare says, we

> "Know all qualities with a learned spirit
> Of human dealings,"

we shall be compelled to acknowledge, that, however unworthy and exceeding all due measure, the hatred of De Monfort may be, it is not at all unnatural; that the cause of it is not of that diminutive size or moderate nature, of which, superficially considered, it appears to be; and that such a disposition, as his, is far from being unsusceptible of excessive and criminal resentment. Extreme sensibility often hoops up, in one narrow circle, the most refined virtues with the blackest vices, all the tender charities with fell hatred, vindictiveness and ruthless cruelty. The same heart that would bleed at the tale of woe, has often, at the instigation of anger, meditated murder. The same hand that, trembling with sympathy, emptied the purse to the beggar's tale, has often, at the call of honour, or of guilty pride, pierced the bosom of a friend with a sword, or sent him to his last account with a pistol. De Monfort has not received from the man he hates any *injury;* but he has received what, to feelings of exquisite sensibility, are infinitely worse—contempt and sneering insult. Not one of the passions is more universally felt, though none perhaps more evades particular notice, than this. Whether it be an infirmity, or a sound part of our composition, it is so intimately woven into the texture of man's nature, that it cannot be removed. Here a stoic may conquer it; there a wretch, subdued to the lowest prostration of spirit, may be insensible to its

Digitized by Google

operation; but still it pervades our existence: the lowest feel it; the proud cannot dispense with it. "We are born," says Burke, "to shun contempt;" and the peasant who delves the earth is as full of the ethereal spirit, which wings its flight from contempt, as the proud and dignified baron. How exquisitely has a luminous dramatic poet expressed this feeling and its effects upon the human heart:

> Surely, out of this,
> Revenge may fashion something strangely cruel,
> Whose bloody memory, in after times
> This truth shall teach inexorable man,
> Who has no touch of mercy to his fellow,
> Most INJURIES A NOBLE MIND MAY PARDON;
> But there are INSULTS CANNOT BE FORGIVEN.
>
> TOBIN'S CURFEW.

Having so far unfolded our sentiments upon this subject, we hope our readers will favour us with their company a little farther, while we endeavour to prove from the play itself the correctness of the opinions we have hazarded.

The Marquis DE MONFORT and his eldest sister, the Lady Jane De Monfort, had, by the death of their parents, become the natural guardians of their younger brothers and sisters, and, for the purpose of discharging the office with fidelity and effect, had forgone all the advantages of connubial life, and remained unmarried. With high rank, hereditary honour, large fortune, the respect of the world, and the love, approaching to adoration, of their friends and dependents, it would seem as if nothing could be wanting to their perfect felicity. To augment those grounds of happiness, they mutually love and revere each other to a degree unexampled in such connexions: yet, both are unhappy: he from some cause, which he keeps in sullen concealment; she, on account of his situation, and her total inability to discover his motives or to remove his sadness.

Her tenderness has at length become irksome to him; her solicitude and inquiries give him pain; and, in order to relieve himself from them, he leaves his house without informing her of his intention, goes to Amberg, a town in Germany, and there puts up at a house he was once before in the habit of frequenting, kept by an old faithful host and humble friend of the name of JEROME. Just on his arrival at Amberg, the play commences.

(To be Continued.)

Digitized by Google

A NEW PLAY.....OF AMERICAN PRODUCTION.

A correspondent at New York informs us, that a new play intitled, ALBERTI ALBERTINI OR THE ROBBER KING, was on the 25th of January performed, with very flattering applause, at the theatre of that city. It is said to be the production of Mr. DUNLAP, once manager of that theatre, and author of some original dramatic pieces; as well as translator of several others from the German. On the merit of this play, we cannot at present offer so much as a conjecture, having not yet had a perusal of it. Of the fable the following sketch has been transmitted to us by our correspondent; and our readers may look for a critical review of the piece, in a future number, provided a copy of it shall fall into our hands.

Feraya, a knight of Malta, in early life falsifies his vows, and contracts an illegal marriage. The fruit of this marriage is a son and daughter. The mother dies. The daughter, Dianora, is educated in a convent, and the son, under the name of Alphonso Albini, is prepared, by Faraya, his father, (in the assumed character of Orsino) for the army. Alphonso, soon after commencing his military career, is brutally misused by a superior officer, and in a paroxysm of rage, revenges himself on the spot. His life becomes forfeit. He flies; falls into the hands of banditti; is eventually elected their leader, and renders himself the terror of Italy under the name of Alberti Albertini, the Robber King.

Feraya, lately appointed general of the Neapolitans, is sent to subdue the Robber King. He disperses the band; but in an accidental rencontre discovers in the dreaded Albertini his long lost son. Albertini also recognises his protector and instructor in the Neapolitan general. The father favors his son's escape; and returning to court, pleads to his master in favor of the Robber King, but in vain; for the monarch, instead of relenting, sets a price of two thousand ducats upon Albertini's head.

At this point the drama commences. Feraya, the father of Albertini, who is known to him only as his instructor, devotes his whole attention to the safety of his son. He disguises himself as a venerable and mysterious hermit, seeks the robber to his wilds, and finds him on the point of another battle. By showing Albertini that he is perfectly acquainted with his early history; and by an artful use of the names of Alphonso and Orsino, Feraya, in this disguise, prevails upon Albertini to intrust with him Rosali, a young girl in whom he (Albertini) is interested, and makes him promise to repair to the house of Feraya, in Naples, disguised as

Digitized by Google

count Mondochini. At Naples, Albertini finds his Rosali again; and Dianora, his sister, now in her father's house, becomes enamoured of him. This breaks off an intended marriage with count Astutti, a soldier of fortune, who determines to revenge himself. The secret of Albertini is betrayed to Astutti, by Lodovico, his servant, who is seduced by Astutti into a fit of intoxication. Astutti, to gratify his diabolical resentment, and gain the two thousand ducats offered for Albertini, pursues him with unremitting industry, and in one instance attempts to take his life, but is prevented by Lodovic, the Robber King's servant; and they both return to the banditti.

After several escapes, the author brings Albertini into the presence of Feraya, who acknowledges Albertini to be Alphonso, his son. The father congratulates himself that by removing from Italy he may enjoy the society of his children in safety, and forget, in a peaceful old age, the crime which had destroyed their mother and endangered them. At that moment Astutti, having traced Albertini, enters with the officers of justice, and, determining to make sure of vengeance, discharges a pistol at him. Dianora in her anxiety to promote her newly found brother's flight, having thrown herself in the way, receives the ball. Albertini's flight is stopt by his solicitude for his sister; and being once in the power of the officers of justice, all hope of life is cut off. Dianora dies. Albertini kills himself; and the erring father is convinced that there is no peace or safety but in virtue.

BENEFITS OF THE ACTORS.

AS, before the publication of our next number, the benefits of our actors will begin to take place, we will not dismiss this article, without offering our readers a few words on that subject, and submiting our thoughts upon it to their consideration.

Most people look upon the benefit given to a performer as a mere gratuity; a something allowed to him over and above the emoluments, to which his labours fairly intitle him; but, this is to view the thing in an erroneous and, we must say it, not very generous light. The benefit is a sort of test of the opinion entertained by the public of the performer's merit; and is, in fact, a portion of his compensation, made wholly distinct from his fixt salary, in order that so much of it at least may be measured by the general estimate of his services, and the value set upon his acting by the public. This is the true reason, why actors feel so much about their benefit; for, upon an average, very little profit accrues to them

Digitized by Google

after paying the expenses, even when the house is what they call a middling one. Considering it as symptomatic of the state of their professional fame, they feel most poignantly at any neglect upon the part of the public, on that occasion. Indeed, who would not feel acutely any disappointment on an expectation in which the two most important concerns of life are involved: character and subsistence?

Yet it is not always a true test of the performer's merit; nor is it, by any means, an infallible diagnostic of the public opinion. Caprice has much to do in it. We have seen actors, who, after playing almost every night in play or farce, many nights in both, being justly applauded every time and keeping the house in a roar of merriment, have at their benefit been left as completely in the lurch, as if they were wholly unknown in the city. This is not acting generously. This is not acting *justly*.

Here are in Philadelphia, perhaps, between two and three thousand people, who are in the constant habit of attending the theatre. Night after night, they receive great pleasure from a particular actor; they express that pleasure by plaudits, and by laughter; and they say to those near them, "Vastly well indeed!—very comical! exceedingly diverting!" and yet, when the time comes for giving that actor his reward, they turn aside; and the only time they neglect attending his performance is—at his benefit.

Though there be no positive expressed obligation, on the part of the public, there is an implied one, a kind of tacit contract that if the actor pleases them for the season, they will mark their approbation by going to his benefit at the end of it. To fail in this is a manifold wrong: withholding his reward from the labourer, refusing to give their testimony to his deserts, and thereby hurting his feelings and injuring his professional character. We know that the actor's claim to this cannot be entertained in a court of law; but it will hold good in *foro conscientiae*, and no just, generous, or proud spirit will demur to it.

We therefore earnestly exhort all who read this, all lovers of the drama, all who wish to draw around us here the most valuable performers by a fair and flattering retribution, not to be over frugal on the ensuing benefit season; but on the contrary, to call to recollection the services of those, who have during the season contributed to their happiness four nights of each week, and in return, to make each of them happy for one.

Digitized by Google

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

THE new arrangements adopted, for conducting THE MIRROR OF TASTE, have necessarily retarded the appearance of this Number, a few days beyond the time appointed for publication; which hereafter will, without fail, take place on the fifth day of each month for the number belonging to the preceding. The removal of the work to a new printing office, of itself, occasioned some delay; the total change in the form of the play, rendered the printing of it, in the first instance, more arduous and slow; and the commencement of the new plan, like the beginning of every operose process, met with difficulties which it will not have to encounter in its future progress. To use a sea-phrase, we have now "got under way;" our sails feel the breeze of Hope; and all impediments being passed, our little bark steers to her destined port.

> Tendimus in Latium; sedes ubi fata quietas
> Ostendunt.

The best concerted and most diligent exertions have not enabled us to procure the portrait due to our subscribers for December month. Till yesterday Mr. Edwin had it not in his power to proceed with the portrait of Mr. Warren. Measures were, therefore, taken to procure an engraving of Mr. Cooke from New-York; and in the certain expectation of receiving it in due time, a biographical sketch of that great actor now constitutes an article of this number: but a something, for which we are unable to accouut, has prevented our request being complied with. We consider ourselves, however, as bound to make good to our subscribers the stipulated number of plates; among which we pledge ourselves for an excellent portrait of Mr. Cooke: Mr. Edwin being now able to apply himself to the work of the Mirror; and having agreed to an arrangement which will preclude the possibility of disappointment for the future.

We regret our inability to accompany the print of Master Payne with a few words respecting the life of the original, whose popularity would no doubt render it grateful to the public. We have to thank that young gentleman for his portrait; but lament that his modesty withheld the rest.

Digitized by Google

MIRROR OF TASTE

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

FOR THE YEAR 1811.

The property of this Work being transferred from Messrs. Bradford and Inskeep to Thomas Barton Zantzinger and Co. the first Number of the year 1811 (January) will be published at the store of the said Thomas Barton Zantzinger and Co. Shakspeare Buildings, South Sixth, near Chesnut street.

THE CONDUCTORS OF THE MIRROR OF TASTE TO THE PUBLIC.

ON the commencement of a new year, something prefatory is expected from the editors of periodical publications: long established custom sanctions the expectation; and we reverence the laws of prescription too much to violate them, even in cases of inferior consequence. Entering on the second year of this work, therefore, we think it incumbent on us to say a few words in that way, not only to offer the customary compliments to our friends, but to inform them that THE MIRROR now comes into the world under new auspices, and with means which embolden us to affirm, that the management of the work in the ensuing year shall fully compensate for its deficiencies in the last.

Retrospectively, we have much to lament, but nothing to be ashamed of. It may be said, that we have failed in redeeming some of the pledges given in our original prospectus: and this charge is certainly true; but we can also state with truth, that the delay is to be ascribed solely to circumstances not within the control of the Editor.

Digitized by Google

So much for the mechanical and commercial conduct of the work. Of the editorial, we freely confess, that its defects, whatever they may be, are entirely our own: for incorrectness in the language, want of taste in the selection, deficiency of interest in the general matter, or error of judgment in the critical observations, whatever the blame may be, we have no one to share it with us: neither, of the little there may be deserving of praise, can any one lay claim to a share, (our ingenious and respectable correspondent DRAMATICUS excepted); since, besides what came from him, we have not received one page of contribution: a fact which, though true, may appear singular; but which we ascribe to the unostentatious nature, and modest reserve of our literary scribes.

Had we no other difficulties than the want of correspondents, to encounter, we should have no plea to offer in abatement of the rigour of criticism: but many and of various kinds have been the clogs upon our efforts; many the obstacles which could not be foreseen, nor, if foreseen, prevented; inhering, as some of them do, in the nature of the work itself, and the checkered disposition of mankind. "*Quot homines, tot sententiæ,*" says the great Roman dramatist; or, in vulgar English phrase, "So many men, so many minds." The human taste is volatile, variable, impatient of control, disloyal to its standard, untrue even to itself, and too often the mere versatile handmaid of a vain and froward will. To please all, therefore, were hopeless; to please many, for a long time, difficult. In criticism, we agnize a scantiness of one quality which others think worth all the rest put together. Men are more inclinable to censure than to praise, and often think that to be wit, which is, in truth, only malice. If we know ourselves, we have never been vain enough to aspire to the one; and we do most cordially abhor the other. Wanting both, our criticisms were disrelished by those who had enough of either one or other to satisfy themselves. Such censors, as we are, cannot please those who open a critical essay, as kind souls go to a public execution, to indulge their sympathies with the butchery of their fellow creatures. Had we flayed alive the players, as very many expected we should have done, disgust would have taken place of pleasure in the audience. Far from being improved, the actors, palsied by reproach, would have sunk under their feelings; and perhaps some, in the agonies of a noble spirit bruised by wanton cruelty, would have shared the fate of

Digitized by Google

Fullarton: the interests of the drama require no such sacrifice—they are not worth it—they shall not have it from us.

There were several other disadvantages we had to encounter in our first year: the state of the times was peculiarly unfavourable, in a commercial point of view, to any work of enterprise; the number of periodical publications, which had already established their just claims to public support, dried up or preoccupied many of the sources of patronage; and while, from without, a multitude of circumstances concurred to discourage hope, and depress exertion, domestic calamity fell with a weight, scarcely to be sustained, and for a long time smothered all our energies. In nothing else presuming to claim alliance with the great lexicographer of Britain, we cannot more truly describe the circumstances under which the greater part of THE MIRROR OF TASTE was composed, than in the very words which that great and good man uses in the preface to his English Dictionary, to describe the circumstances under which he wrote that work: "*With little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.*" With the recollection of so many embarrassments, pressing themselves upon the mind, we cannot help contemplating with wonder, and indeed with something like pride, the station which THE MIRROR OF TASTE now holds in public estimation. It is surely something to be able at this time to say, that we can survey our present situation with pleasure, and look forward to the future with more than hope.

In what manner the work *may* be carried on, the part already published has shown. In what manner it *shall* be carried on, is a point on which it might not, perhaps, become us to speak, and on which, therefore, we "refer our readers to the coming on of time." Some slight changes may take place in the arrangement; some material ones will be made in the general management of the work. For a religious observance of all promises, and the most strict punctuality in the publication, we pledge ourselves. The prints shall be judiciously selected, and executed in the best manner, by the best artists in America; and the plays, accompanying the several numbers, shall be printed with a type, and in a form which cannot fail to give perfect satisfaction.

We have nothing to add, but that upon this plain, unvarnished representation of the subject, we feel some confidence of success,

Digitized by Google

when we solicit the support of the public in general, and in particular, the correspondence of the learned and ingenious, to whom THE MIRROR opens a wide field for literary exercitation, being by no means confined to the drama, and excluding from its pages nothing but politics, theology, professional polemics of every kind, and the more profound parts of erudition.

TERMS.

The price of the Mirror will be eight dollars per annum, payable on the publication of the sixth Number in each year.

A Number will be issued every month, forming two volumes in the year.

With each Number will be delivered a play.

Each Number will be embellished with an elegant engraving.

Digitized by Google

THE

MIRROR OF TASTE,

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

VOLUME III.] FEBRUARY, 1811. [NUMBER II.

HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 16.]

WHEN a few writers of more boldness than others had brought the battery of ridicule to bear upon "The MYSTERIES," a practicable breach was soon made in that monstrous system of amusement; and as it began to fall into disrepute, dramas of a less preposterous nature succeeded. The *religious* mysteries were gradually decried; and a kind of heathen mystery became the fashion of the times. The innovation which had begun with "The tragedy of the Sacrifice of Abraham," the "Joyous Mystery of the Three Kings," and the "Pleasant Conceit of the Apocalypse of St. John of Zebedee," already mentioned, encouraged other poets to employ their talents in the invention of new modes of dramatic amusement; and there appeared a play called "The Mystery of the destruction of Troy the great; the rape of Helen done by Paris, and composed in good French rhyme; together with the prowess, the victories, and the nobleness of the valiant Hector; the damnable treason committed by the Greeks, and other transactions between the Trojans and Grecians." This piece excited no less admiration than the religious mysteries had done before, and,

Digitized by Google

being purely heathen, was less liable to objection on the score of profanation. The avidity with which it was received led to a controversy, in which the advocates of the heathen mystery, having more reason and common sense to support their system, gave the religious dramatists a complete defeat. The priests were compelled to submit; and dramas of a more seemly sort, founded on subjects more consonant to scenic representation, were brought forward, with a new general title: the term "Mystery" was abolished, and that of "MORALITY" took its place. Under this name every thing was permitted; and sometimes holy subjects found their way again upon the stage, mixed up with the heathen.

With such a boundless field for them to range over, the candidates for dramatic fame became more numerous than ever, and the subjects of their productions much more diversified. A Morality, in honour of the Assumption, was composed by a seaman, of the name of John Parmentier, who was supposed to be the first European that ever set foot on the ground of Africa: another, called "The Reformation of taverns and tippling houses, and the destruction of Gluttony," was written by a cardinal: and a valet de chambre of Louis the Twelfth composed a morality which he called "The Just Man and the Man of this World," in which the design of the author was to personify virtue and vice. The *denouement* of this piece was strictly conformable to the tenets of the times and country; for the Just Man, after going through the purification of purgatory, ascended to heaven—and the soul of the Man of this World was carried off by legions of devils to everlasting fire.

To these succeeded three moralities composed by a physician: one of these was called "The Road to Health," a second "The Government of the Human Frame," and the third "A Prohibition of the Indulgence of the Passions." At this time flourished a poetess of the name of LOUISA L'ABBE, whose productions were so much admired that she became distinguished by the name of the *French Sappho*. Nor was Louisa less celebrated for the violence of her attachment to her lover, than Sappho on account of her passion for Phaon; having followed him, dressed in men's clothes, to the siege of Perpignan, and encountered every hardship and danger incident to warfare, by his side. It would seem, however, as if she repented of her choice; for, having on their return from the siege, given him her hand, she some time afterwards wrote a very fine morality

Digitized by Google

called "The Folly of Love." This extraordinary woman could write poetry, if tradition be correct, in four different languages; and her house was the rendezvous of all the men of eminent genius and literature of her time.

The reader will call to mind that in a former part of this history a particular account was given of a mystery called "The Prodigal Son," by *Rutebeuf*. The superior excellence of that piece occasioned it to be looked up to as a model by succeeding poets. It was itself performed, from time to time, with occasional alterations; and a multitude of imitations of it were brought upon the stage. Scarcely was there an instance of filial impiety, or youthful misconduct, which fact or invention could supply, that was not converted into a morality, and exhibited on the public stage. There was one, written in praise and honour of honest girls, and intitled "The Poor Villager;" the subject and scheme of which merits consideration. The plot was this: the lord of a township, having taken a fancy to a beautiful girl, the daughter of one of his vassals, puts in practice every stratagem to corrupt her; but, finding all his arts ineffectual, resolves to possess her by force, and has recourse to personal violence. In this extremity, the unhappy girl, being resolute in virtue, affects to be disposed to compliance, and promises to make him happy on the special proviso of her being permitted first to have a conversation upon the subject with her father. To this the lord agrees; but, suspecting that it is only a trick to evade his designs, resolves to overhear their conversation, and so contrives matters for the purpose as to get himself placed, without her knowledge, in a concealment from which he can hear every word she utters. Here he is astonished to hear her expressing the most solemn determination to die rather than have her chastity violated, and imploring her father to strike off her head directly. The nobleman, charmed as well as astonished at her virtue, and struck with remorse for his base intentions, breaks in upon their conference, entreating her forgiveness; then liberates both her and her father from their state of vassalage, and loads them with wealth and favours.

This, though a simple story, contains a good moral, conveyed in a manner well suited to an uncorrupted and unenlightened age: but there was another, still more worthy of notice, on account of the marvellous absurdity of the superstition on which it turns: it was called "The Ungrateful Son;" and the fable of it is as follows:

Digitized by Google

A foolishly fond couple have a son, who is so entirely the object of their affections, that they bring their affairs to ruin by indulging him in every enjoyment, and making his fortune. He has become extremely rich and wallows in luxury; while they are reduced to the lowest degree of poverty and distress. In this extremity they naturally turn their eyes to him, as their only resource for succor;—they fly to him—unfold to him their misery, and throw themselves upon his filial duty for relief, telling him that they know not where else to seek it: but he rejects them, treats them with savage, wanton cruelty, and, though they are famishing with hunger, will not afford them a morsel of a rich banquet, which he is, at the time, in the very act of devouring: even the mother complains of her sufferings in vain, and, on craving a morsel of food, is spurned from her barbarous son with derision and contempt. This most unnatural conduct to his mother overwhelms the father with horror and indignation, and in his agonies he falls upon his knees, and lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven, invokes the vengeance of heaven and implores the Almighty to pour down some signal curse upon the head of the guilty wretch. No sooner has this dreadful imprecation been uttered than it is complied with, in the most extraordinary manner. The ungrateful monster is, at the moment, employed in opening a savoury smoking meat-pye, when forth from under the paste issues a huge toad, flies at him, sticks to his face, covers it all over completely, and attaches itself so closely that no human art can remove it. The unhappy being now begins to repent; and the parents in their overweening fondness forgive him, and offer up their prayers to remove the toad; but it won't do; for they are informed that nothing but his own prayers, directed to proper objects, can expiate his criminal conduct: they, therefore, send him first to one priest, then to another, then to a bishop, then to a cardinal, and from the cardinal to the pope himself, who sends him back to the priests to take the same round again. Thus he is despatched from one to the other till his whole fortune is exhausted. He is then fit for the operation of mercy, and by a certain quota of exorcisms, exhortations and prayers, is relieved from the monstrous reptile; and a complete reconciliation takes place; and he is restored to the favour of heaven; and the affection of his parents is the consequence.

To these succeeded another piece, which may be said to have outheroded Herod. In this, which had for its title "The Morality

Digitized by Google

of the Child of Perdition," the miserable hero carries destruction to its utmost possible extent; and, to use the very significant metaphor of Sancho Panza, "leaves nothing in the bottom of the inkhorn," for he kills his father, hangs his mother, and afterwards runs mad.

We have thus selected from the multitude of dramas belonging to the epoch now under consideration a sufficient number of instances, not only to mark the distinction between the Mysteries and the Moralities, but to show what were the nature and value of the best, or, to come more near to truth, the only dramatic attractions of the time; and this closes that memorable era in the history of the French stage, which gave the first shock to "the Confraternity of the Passion," but which those sacerdotal actors patched up by joining the laymen, who gave it: for, being too cunning to abandon so fruitful a source of emolument, they contrived to bolster up their declining reputation by first conniving at, and then joining in the performance of the moralities at their own established theatre.

Again the confraternity were in danger of a new revolution in the public taste, to the certain detriment of their interest, and, for aught they could foresee, to the ultimate dissolution of their society. A number of young gentlemen of fortune as well as family, who by dissolute habits, and a pursuit of pleasure so eager and resolute as to overleap every opposition, had brought themselves to ruin, turned their thoughts to the stage for a livelihood, and formed themselves into a society, to which they gave the names of "*Les Enfans de Sans Souci.*" They were, in general, good scholars, and, like most reprobates, who ascribe to the unkindness of their fellow creatures the ruin incurred by their own profligacy and imprudence, got out of conceit with the world, and, in this humor, resorting to the drama, made Aristophanes their model; and, after his example, exposed the prevailing vices and follies of society, and lashed with severe satire the manners of their times. This new species of entertainment succeeded beyond expectation, and became so popular that the confraternity began to be alarmed, and had immediate recourse to the same expedient practised before with the morality men: they invited them to join the society, to which the others acceded; and this was followed by the rapid decline and consequent extinction of the original confraternity, which, like a powerful whirlpool, hitherto swallowed up every thing that came within the draft of its vortex. As the drama

Digitized by Google

had travelled from mysteries to moralities, it now moved on from moralities to farces, and from farces again sunk into the most gross buffooneries—sometimes too into a heterogeneous mixture of them all together. At length the government took the depraved condition of the stage into its serious consideration, deprived the confraternity of the theatre, and restored it to the purposes of its original institution, converting it back again into an hospital of the holy trinity.

Francis the first, who deprived the confraternity of the theatre, no doubt intended to discountenance the new drama; but he once more granted the brotherhood letters patent, restoring and confirming to them all the privileges they enjoyed in the fourteenth century. Thus authorized, they went to work on a new establishment, renting for that purpose a large building called the HOTEL DE FLANDRES, and continued to act for four years; at the end of which period the king ordered the hotel to be demolished.

The character of the king, when connected with his conduct to the brotherhood, renders it indubitable that there must have been in the dramas they performed something radically vitious and offensive to morality and religion; he would not else have struck two such severe blows at an establishment which tended to advance the interests of literature: for Francis so liberally extended his protection to men of science, that it procured for him the distinguished title of "The Father of Letters," and eclipsed the weaknesses of his administration, which, in most instances, was injurious, if not disgraceful.

In order to secure themselves from the evils attending an insecure tenure, the brotherhood resolved to build a theatre upon their own foundation, bought ground for the purpose, and raised a theatre, consisting of a hall and other edifices; some of which are now in existence. This theatre was erected in the ground where the palace of the duke of Burgundy once stood, and was the fourth theatre ever built in Paris. Having accomplished this, they made an application to the parliament of Paris, enforced by strong solicitation backed by great court influence, in consequence of which they obtained permission to establish themselves there as dramatic performers; but upon the express condition that they should not exhibit any but profane subjects—that is to say, subjects which, without meddling with the sacred mysteries of christianity, would

Digitized by Google

have a tendency to inculcate virtue, and promote the practice of true christian morality.

The confraternity, however, could not get rid of their old itch, nor content themselves with composing and acting dramas unmixed with subjects of holy writ; and, as they were prohibited from them, resolved to abandon the business, in their own persons, and, therefore, hired their theatre, scenery, trappings and decorations to a company of comedians, who had just then united together with a view of obtaining the royal mandate to perform. In this they readily succeeded: for the king was glad to put down the mysteries entirely, and knew that there was no mode of accomplishing it so effectually as supplying their place by exhibitions more rational, natural and interesting to the public. The pieces performed by the new company in a great degree answered his majesty's expectations, and demonstrated his sagacity in such subjects. They were liked much more than those of the confraternity; a new light broke in scattered rays upon the public mind; and a new taste dawned upon the country, which every day cleared up further, and became more extensive and more pure. The art of printing which, though invented in the thirteenth century, during the reign of Louis IX., the Crusader, hence called *Saint* Louis, continued long in a languishing state, was about this time brought to considerable perfection, and served to effectuate the views of Francis in establishing literature in France upon an extensive and firm foundation. Books were so multiplied that they became common; learning became pretty generally the employment of the higher order of the youth of France; and the dead languages became systematically a part of their education. This introduced translations from the Greek and Latin authors; and the dramatic works of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plautus and Terence gradually came forth to the world in the best French spoken at that day.

The first regular tragedy that appeared in the French language was the ELECTRA of SOPHOCLES, translated by LAZARE BAIF, a gentleman of Angers, and a pupil of the celebrated BUFE. Baif, possessing a fine genius and an excellent disposition, travelled for the purpose of forming his morals and improving his understanding. Arriving at Rome, he placed himself, for the purpose of learning Greek, under the learned MARCUS MUSURUS;* and when

* Marcus Musurus was a native of Candia, taught Greek at the several universities of Venice, Padua and Rome, and contributed much to the re-

Digitized by Google

be had, as far as it was practicable, accomplished the object for which he left France, returned again to his native country, and, for the purpose of entirely devoting himself to study, retired to his estate in the province of Anjou. Intelligence respecting his talents and pursuits reached the ears of Francis the first, who resolved to prevent them, if possible, from being lost to the world; called him forth from his obscurity, raised him to a high seat in his confidence, and actually sent him ambassador to Venice. There Baif fell in love with and married a young lady of condition, by whom he had several children. On his return to France, the king raised him to employments of honour and emolument, of which he made the best use: for instead of resigning himself to indolence and luxury, as most men do when they have attained such situations, he devoted himself to those labours he considered most conducive to the public good and his sovereign's satisfaction, and translated from the dead languages such works as he thought might serve the state and advance learning. His most delightful task was translating Sophocles and Euripides; and in the year 1537, the tragedy already mentioned came from the press with the following title, "The Electra, a tragedy; containing the inhuman and truly piteous death of Agamemnon, by his wicked wife Clytemnestra, and her cruel adulterer Egysthus."

In order to render this work subservient to the purposes of general instruction in the Greek language, and make it the means of enabling the French people to comprehend more clearly the nature of Grecian poetry, he translated it closely, verse by verse, which of course rendered it unfit for representation. Seventeen years afterwards, however, he gave a translation of the HECUBA of EURIPIDES, done more freely. This was in 1550, and, his benefactor Francis being dead, dedicated it to his son Henry the second. It was reputed a work of great ingenuity and learning.

Several eminent scholars, stimulated by the example of Baif, applied themselves to the turning of Greek tragedy into French, and chiefly an author of the name of THOMAS SIBILET, who emulated his learned predecessor in a translation of the Iphigenia of Euri-

vival of letters. He was made bishop of Malvazia, in the Morea, by Leo X., and died soon after of a dropsy in 1517. He was the friend of Erasmus, and to his critical knowledge the public was indebted for the first edition of Aristophanes and Athenæus. He also published "Etymologicum Magnum Græcorum."

Digitized by Google

pides. As all these, however, were but translators, the French consider Stephen Jodelle as the founder of their tragedy, because he was the first who had the boldness to produce a tragedy of his own composition. Jodelle was one of the *pleiades*, or constellation of seven poets of France mentioned by Rousard. The name of the tragedy he produced was "Cleopatra Captive," published in 1552. Yet, though the French call him the founder of their tragedy, the Duke de Valliere has pronounced his Cleopatra "a servile imitation of the cut and form of the Greek theatre."

(To be continued.)

BIOGRAPHY.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WARREN,

Actor and Manager of the Philadelphia Theatre.

Mr. Warren is a native of the celebrated city of Bath in England, where he was born on the tenth day of May 1767, as appears from the church records of his baptism in the books of St. James's parish. Though he cannot, with Othello, boast that he "fetches his life and being from men of royal liege," he can do more than many men of royal liege can do,—he can truly affirm that he fetches his life and being from an honest race of useful men, who for ages maintained a respectable character among their fellow yeomen of that country. His grandfather was a farmer, and had a mill on his own estate which, though small, was enough for all the purposes of content and plenty, and was so near Bath that a portion of it now constitutes a part of the city, and is that which all who frequent the place know by the name of "The Grove." Philip Warren, the father of our manager, was bred a cabinet maker, which trade he followed at Bath for many years, and at this time carries on in the city of London. At the usual age our friend William was put to school, in order to his receiving an education suited to the business intended for him by his father; and as this was the trade of a cabinet maker, it may reasonably be concluded that the dead languages made no part of his acquirements; a competent knowledge of the English language, a good hand-

Digitized by Google

writing, with arithmetic and accounts, being generally the whole amount of a commercial education in England; but if the boy be intended for one of the mechanical trades of a certain description, geometry, at least practical geometry, is perhaps superadded.

The provident schemes of parents for the future pursuits of their children have been oftener frustrated by the stage, than by any other of those specious delusions which dazzle the weak eyes of youth, and betray them from the smooth, beaten highway of discretion. Some of the most delightful reveries of family pride and parental partiality have been dissipated—some of the most lofty castles, which an overweening imagination ever fabricated in the air, have been laid in careless ruin—some of the most splendid visions of fame and fortune and title, which fancy ever raised to flatter and to baffle hope, have been dissolved and melted into air by one touch from the wand of that witching necromancer Shakspeare. Full many a life has been saved by the spirit of our immortal bard whispering in the ear of an intended Esculapius to change his field of action from the sick room to the stage, and to poison only in fiction; full many a pulpit has been relieved from a projected burden—full many a pious mother's hopes and father's waking dreams of tythes and lawn sleeves annihilated by the wicked seduction of the sock and buskin;—and the most rancorous adversaries of the drama must be fain to acknowledge the important services it has rendered to society by drawing over a multitude of men of genius from the pillage of the long robe to the pageantry of the stage, and thinning the legions of Westminster Hall. Merchants themselves—mechanics—men of all classes and descriptions in this motley world of ours, have found the charms of the scenic art an overmatch for all their forecast and prudence in the disposal of their children: but the parents of Warren were too wise to fret themselves, and too fond of their son to worry him on account of a choice which, though it might be a partial disappointment of their views, seemed necessary to his happiness. When, therefore, at an early age, he repudiated the bench, with the intent to form a union for life with the stage, they neither attempted to counteract his purpose, nor insulted him for his choice; on the contrary, with a share of good sense and generous affection which does them the more honour, because it is so seldom found among men, they contributed to help him, supplying him from their own funds in the many pecuniary distresses to

Digitized by Google

which the profession he adopted has, at all times, been more than any other exposed.

Warren imbibed his first passion for the stage, as many others had done before him, from the habit of loitering about the playhouse in company with other boys of his age. During the representations at Bath, which are frequent and excellent, he and his companions omitted no opportunity of attending the theatre; and, from witnessing the performance of the actors, they soon became inflamed with the ambition to act a play themselves. After many consultations and discussions, in which the merits of several plays, and the practicability of acting them, were canvassed, they fixed upon Julius Cæsar. Having duly calculated their pecuniary means for equipping themselves for the representation, and formed a plan proportioned to their resources, they hired a room that answered their purpose; where, instigated by their ruling passion, and not having the fear of criticism before their eyes, they murdered poor Julius in the capitol. Warren personated the *spare* Cassius, for which, robust as he has been since, he was at that time, in one respect at least, admirably formed, being very lank and slender; at that age "he was not an eagle's talon in the waist. He could have crept through an alderman's thumb ring:——but a plague of sighing and grieving, it puffs a man up like a bladder."* Applause was lavished by the spectators on our young actors: but since ill nature itself could scarcely refuse its tribute upon such an occasion, it does not follow that the performance was excellent, because the audience was pleased. The reception which the boys met with, however, served to convince them of that which they were before sufficiently disposed to believe, namely, that they were very good actors; and from this persuasion the transition was short to another, that if they could act so well on one stage, they might surely do so on another. The question, indeed, was obvious and natural enough for wiser persons than they could have been—"If we can please a *room*-full of spectators, what should hinder us from pleasing a *house* full?" In a word, their young brains were so inflamed with the histriomania, that they resolved to make a public experiment as soon as an occasion should offer. Three of them actually went upon the stage some time after; but of the three Warren only remained on it: the other two having soon abandoned

* The words of Sir John Falstaff, a character in which Warren excels.

Digitized by Google

it, partly on account of incapacity and partly discouraged by the poverty, privations and hardships they encountered. Warren felt so confident of success, that he resolved to take advantage of the first opportunity that should present itself of applying for admission into some of those itinerant companies of players who travel up and down acting plays through all parts of England.

He was not yet seventeen years of age when the opportunity for which he so ardently panted fell in his way. At a town called Chippenham, thirteen miles from Bath, on the London road, a company was collected, under the direction of one of those who, by the courtesy of their own profession, are styled "Country Managers;" but by the sneering licentiousness of the vulgar and illiberal are denominated Strollers. Our Chippenham manager was one who contrived to render himself, during his lifetime, rather notorious than conspicuous by his conduct to his actors, and was the same who has, since his death, been gibetted up to execration by Riley in that curious medley of fact, borrowed anecdote, and invented incident, called "The Itinerant." The name of this extraordinary character, whom Riley has skewered, spitted and roasted with such address under the name of Riggs, was *Biggs*, and he was the father of a brood of histrions, three of whom were at that time performing in his company; to wit, James, a tolerable low comedian; Binny (we suppose Albina) now Mrs. Grove; and Anne, who first as Miss Biggs, and now as Mrs. Young, has for several years been one of the prime favorites of the London audience, and is unquestionably a conspicuous ornament to the stage.

There being no newspaper published at Chippenham, Biggs advertised his performances in the Bath papers; some of which falling into the hands of Warren and his associates, they formed the resolution of setting off for Chippenham and offering themselves to the manager. They did so. Warren being desired by Biggs to give him a specimen of his qualifications, spoke one of the speeches of young Norval, to which the other having listened very attentively, declared it to be admirable; and expressed the most perfect satisfaction not only at the delivery but the action of our youngster. "I should have had no great cause to plume myself upon his approbation," said Warren, "if I had then known as much as I did afterwards; for Biggs knew no more whether I was right or wrong than the meanest candlesnuffer in his employment." Whatever foundation there was for Biggs's favorable

Digitized by Google

opinion, it had at least the happy effect of procuring our youth a welcome reception into the company; and might have been also, in some respect, an inducement with Biggs to receive on trial Warren's companions, who were not equally intitled to approbation.

The night for taking his more awful trial before the tribunal of the public being appointed, Warren appeared, for the first time in his life on a public stage, in the character of young Norval. One of his companions of the name of Smith was put forward at the same time in the character of Glenalvon. Smith completely failed—but Warren succeeded far beyond his own expectations; and Biggs was not only highly pleased with his new acquisition, but extremely proud of his own sagacity and penetration in discovering so soon the young man's talents. Had our young adventurer received such warm testimonials of satisfaction from a judicious critical audience, he would have had just cause to exult; the plaudits bestowed upon him being loud, frequent, and repeated from the first to the last. But, "to tell the truth," says he, "I have often since been astonished at the obtuseness of faculties of our small country town audiences in England, and have wondered not only how they could enjoy and applaud, but how they could endure such wretched performers and performances as they frequently have served up to them."

Before we go farther it may be as well to bring the reader a little acquainted with this Mr. Biggs, or Riggs as Riley calls him. Biggs in person, face, intellect and education was perhaps less fitted for the profession of a player than any man that ever stept upon a stage. He was broad, fat and unwieldy. His large face, fleshy, bloated, circular, unmarked by muscle, and destitude of shade, because utterly colorless, was naturally incapable of any expression but that of gluttony, or stupid phlegm: if it could be said to display an outward sign of any inward emotion, it was that of purseproud exultation, or occasionally of anger. The gifts of nature to this pretty child of hers were highly improved for the profession by accident and habit,—for by the former he was crippled and had a bowed iron supplement to one of his legs; and by the latter he had acquired the most absurd and ridiculous deportment and gesticulation imaginable. Nor did this curious assemblage of personal beauties want any advantage it could derive from dress, which generally looked as if it had been culled, article

Digitized by Google

by article, with the most scrupulous regard to the setting off such a person, from the cast wardrobe of a theatre. Such a ludicrous composition of old and new fashions, of grave and gay, of tawdry finery and beastly slovenliness, has seldom been seen out of the farcery of the stage. The prevailing characteristic of it, however, was faded frippery. In a shabby scarlet waistcoat, bound with shabby gold lace, was that sepulchre of "victuals crude and carnal," his paunch, enveloped. The color of his coat was generally one of those bright kinds which the vulgar choose for finery sake—such as powder blue, pea green, or flashy dabs of that sort; and as those soon fade, and he wore them to the last shred, for nine tenths of his time at least, his coat was shabby. A large tie wig, with enormous curls, embellished his face, which, streaming at every pore, was commonly besprent with moisture, so that it shone as if it had been recently washed with oil. When these exhalations were so copious as to trickle down his forehead, his hand was often the succedaneum for a handkerchief; and with his fore finger, he scraped rather than wiped it away. To cap the edifice, he wore a round hat small enough for a boy of sixteen.

The language of the man was worthy of such a person. It was a compound of all the vulgar slangs which separately distinguish Wapping, St. Giles's and the jails, mixed up with the cant of the stroller's green room; and it seemed as if Mesdames Slipslop and Malaprop were the models on which he had formed his style. Of this Riley has given several specimens in his Itinerant; but Warren thinks the description rather exaggerated. That the fellow was very ignorant he owns, but not so extremely ignorant as Riley has described him.

To finish the picture: this disgusting mass of worthlessness was vain beyond all example, and particularly boastful of his wealth, upon all occasions pulling out his purse and displaying his guineas, or as he was wont to call them his "goldfinches," his "singing birds."

Biggs had neither a regular established theatre, nor a permanent company; but having got possession of movable theatrical property to a considerable amount, that is to say, of scenery, decorations, library, music, and wardrobe, and having some money in hand, he contrived to collect about him a company of players, of one sort or other, with which he moved up and down the country, stopping at

Digitized by Google

such towns as had no established theatre or stationary company, and there performing plays as long as he could draw money enough to pay the expenses of performing. If the place in which he intended to play, happened to be an assises town, he applied to the magistrate for a grant of the session house to act in: if not, he got into some public assembly room, or, if there were none, he contented himself with the most spacious apartment he could hire, which he fitted up and decorated rather handsomely. Though rapacious to excess, he was purseproud and vain, and had the ambition to be thought splendid in the decoration of his theatre. At Chippenham he had the town-hall fitted up very neatly. The jury box serving for a gallery.

With most of the fraternity of country managers, the performers generally play upon shares: a system which gives the former a grievous advantage over those who are condemned to serve under them, leaving the unfortunate sufferers almost entirely at the mercy of the principal for their quota of the profits. If the manager be honest, the players come in for their just right and no more; but if, on the other hand, he be a knave, they are sure to be fleeced. And although, among those travelling managers, there are not wanting men who would reflect credit on a much higher station, and who treat their actors with justice and even generosity and fatherly kindness, it is to be feared that the majority are of a very different description. The celebrated James Whiteley, mentioned in the biography of Hodgkinson, is said to have been one of the former: of the latter, this Biggs was a memorable instance. Indeed the means by which they have it in their power to peculate upon their company, (though not without suspicion, at least without open discovery), are so many and so very practicable, that it requires more virtue than men of loose lives in general possess, to resist the temptation. The expenditures and receipts being entirely in their hands, they can swell the account they render of the one, and diminish that of the other, without incurring the least risk of positive detection, and during this process the poor actor undergoes every species of distress.

Biggs was not only one of those harpies, but was in all likelihood the very worst of them. At the time Warren joined his company, he had no less than nine shares on the following accounts: for his three children one share each, (to this they were justly intitled, being good performers); for dead shares as they are called, that is,

Digitized by Google

scenery, wardrobe, &c. four; for himself a share; and a share for his wife. These two last were palpable impositions; because so far from either being useful as actors, they were downright nusances on the stage. But this was not all. Biggs pretended to scrape the fiddle, and some nights set himself down half a crown for his assistance in the orchestra.

Besides all this, he bought every thing for the performances, and charged what he pleased for it; and he received in person the money at the door, and rendered what account of the sum he thought proper. Thus he contrived so to manage it that the shares of the actors might, without much exaggeration, be compared to those which the Lion in the fable allowed to his subject beasts, who hunted down the prey for him. It is to practices of this kind, and not to the indifference of the people of England to theatrical exhibitions, the distresses of itinerant actors, for ages proverbial, are to be ascribed. It is this, which drives so many of them to humiliating and often disreputable expedients for the support of life; and subjects the whole body, on their account, to the contempt and derision of a stupid, ignorant and unfeeling population. Among those victims of managerial fraud and cunning, there are many men of genius, sterling worth and exalted sentiment, who for years, nay some for their whole lives, languish in penury, and in circumstances the most afflicting; not in obscurity, for in their situation obscurity were comparative comfort, but in visible, broad day-light humiliation—in elevated misery;—as actors, for their hour admired and applauded on the stage;—as men, contemned and neglected, because in distress.

But, to return to our subject. Elated to rapture with the applause he had received in young Norval, our young candidate for fame returned to Bath; where, having informed his father and mother of the step he had taken, and the success he had met with, and thereby smoothed the reluctant brow of parental authority, he applied himself with unremitted earnestness and industry to the study of some characters in which he hoped soon to establish still higher claims to the applause of the public; being determined to make as soon as possible another attempt, and to plant his foot firmly and permanently upon the stage. He had not been long engaged thus, when he was interrupted by Biggs, who unexpectedly arrived at Bath and desired to see him.

Digitized by Google

By his rapacity and inhuman extortion Biggs had so entirely alienated the hearts of the actors, that he was often obliged to shut up his theatre for want of assistants. Considering the nature of the man, it is not a little extraordinary that any actor who knew his character should enter into his employment at all; or that those who were ignorantly surprised into it should remain with him many weeks. Besides, exclusive of his conduct to them, travelling actors are considered as having a strong propensity to wandering, to novelty of situation and change of place, which they indulge often to the great detriment of their professional character and pecuniary interest. This propensity is first engendered by the despotism of the mimic monarchs they serve, and the distresses in which it involves them; for who is he that in misery does not hope to obtain relief by change of place? To this impulse from distress, the sagacious Horace remarks, that even the dull phlegmatic merchant himself is not insensible.

Impiger extremos currit mercator ad Indos,
Per mare *pauperiem fugiens*, per saxa, per ignes.

How then should that mercurial, sublimated being, an actor, be expected to rest motionless while buffeted by tyranny, or patiently to sojourn with poverty and contempt? Beside, while they are thus impelled forward by motives so very urgent, they are but little retarded in their migrations by incumbrance or impediment. Like soldiers, they are in general ready for a march, on short notice—they are rarely incumbered with heavy baggage,—and if they have not cash to spare for a seat in the inside of a stage-coach or on the out, they can at all times resort to the pad which Bishop Jewell gave to the immortal Hooker to help him on his journey—a stick; and being used to "trip it on the light fantastic toe," and moreover pretty generally in good hunting condition, they walk with surprising alacrity and ease. He must be but a poor fainthearted creature who cannot extract some consolation even from sorrow, and force misery itself to furnish him with mirth. The itinerant players have in their composition, or their habits, much of that lighthearted philosophy; and, joking upon their distresses and their *penchant* for migration, have got in use a pleasant, consolatory sort of a proverb:

"Shoes well soled,
"A shilling in the pocket,
and
"A fig for the managers."

Digitized by Google

It was but a very short time after Warren's return to the house of his father at Bath, that Biggs once again was left in the lurch by his company, who deserted him *en corps*. Finding himself disabled from opening his theatre until he could procure a new *suite* of performers, he resolved to try his fortune among those who had not yet experienced the misery of dealing with him; and among the rest fixed upon Warren, who not only had talents to be useful, but had not yet felt the effects of his extortion or insolence. The terms he proposed were deemed fair and reasonable. Warren had not yet got an insight into the ways and means of country managers, and, being impatient to enter fully into the career of his intended profession, readily swallowed the gilded bait held out to him by Biggs. He engaged on shares with him, returned to Chippenham, and appeared there, for the second time on any stage, in the character of Don Carlos, in the Revenge. The next play Biggs got up was the West Indian, in which, to Warren's surprise and mortification, he was appointed to the character of Stockwell. Well, indeed, might he be mortified to be put at his time of life, being little more than seventeen years of age, into a character so grave and elderly. What made it more irksome to him was that his supposed son, Belcour, was performed by a coarse person, many years elder than himself, who was, in no one respect, fit for the part; his voice being exactly adapted to the office of a boatswain of a man of war, and his manner and deportment scarcely less so. This man, whose real name was Haymes, but who went by that of Kerridge, had been a coachmaker at Exeter, and took it into his head to abandon his trade in order to follow the fortunes of a strolling company. It is proper here to remark, that this was not Thomas Haymes, who was at one time the hero of Exeter, and failed in an attempt to play Belcour at Drury Lane. Such as he was, however, Biggs put Warren into old Mr. Stockwell, in order to enable Haymes to murder Belcour. Nor was this the whole amount of our youth's cause for mortification: he was obliged to go on in Stockwell, dressed in a large white bushy wig, and a suit of clothes which, being made for a stout, fat, punchy fellow, hung about him, who, as we have before remarked, was very slender, "like an old lady's loose gown," and must have made him look very ridiculous. He himself candidly says, that the whole play, and indeed all their exhibitions, were so extremely contemptible that he never thinks of them without wondering how any rational being could sit to see them out.

Digitized by Google

Finding that Warren had a good memory, a disposition to industry and diligent study, and an easy temper, Biggs imposed upon him shamefully, and gave him every long character to perform; and as the players were continually leaving the company, made him a versatile hack in all kinds of characters as it suited the needy purposes of his theatre. Hence it fell out, that, in no very long period of time, Warren had performed almost every character in play and farce; frequently doubling, as they call it, that is to say, playing two parts in the play—nay sometimes three, and afterwards performing at least one part in the afterpiece. For all this his receipts scarcely amounted to a very spare subsistence; rarely more than four shillings a week. He, in conjunction with another player of the name of Stannard, had a benefit, which produced the largest sum he had yet touched as a player—the receipts of the house, over and above the expenses, amounting to thirty shillings, or about three dollars and a half a piece. The gentlemen of Chippenham, taking into consideration the distressed circumstances of the actors, laid a little plan for their relief, and performed two nights for them, admitting no part of the company but the actresses to play along with them. This generous scheme was successful; the profits, when fairly shared, gave about four and twenty shillings to each, with which, and the little cash he had brought from home, Warren was able to pay his way and get through the season.

Those who live in plenty, and have not known experimentally what it is to endure severe privations, will wonder how men qualified by education for the stage, and of course nurtured in comfort, could exist under such galling distress. There are few that know Warren who will not be surprised how he contrived to make out life upon the miserable pittance arising from his labours, or how for such a pittance he would work so hard. "I am convinced" says he, speaking on this subject, "that in the whole time I was with Biggs, I did not receive upon an average, more than four shillings a week. My mother, to be sure, occasionally assisted, or I could not have got on; and, as it was, my wants were great: yet I do not know that I have ever been much happier. I was blessed with a strong constitution, excellent animal spirits, and a natural disposition to contentment; and these I never impaired by intemperance."

From Chippenham, Biggs went to Warminster, a trading town

Digitized by Google

of Wiltshire, and waiting on lord Weymouth, procured a grant of the Great Ball-room over the Courthouse, to play in. There had not been a company in that town for twenty-three years before, about which time one under the management of Bates, the father of Bates the comedian, who now has a theatre in New England, performed there with little success, it is to be presumed, since it was for so many years after deserted by the actors. Notice was now given to the company to assemble at Warminster at the end of three weeks, in which time the scenery, &c. was transported there in wagons; but at the end of that three weeks, the Quarter Sessions were to be held, so that the players could not get possession of the Ball-room for a fortnight longer; and thus were those poor sufferers full five weeks without receiving a shilling. As soon as the Quarter Sessions were over, the company performed, constantly to full houses: but this success made little difference to any but Biggs, who fleeced them so that they were not better off than they had been at Chippenham.

Thus oppressed, starved, and irritated, the performers left Biggs one by one. Warren was enabled by supplies received from home, to stand his ground, and feeling averse to "unlace his reputation, and spend his rich opinion for the name of" a deserter, remained with Biggs, who now found it his interest to give him the first line of business. He played young Marlow, and characters of that cast in comedy. In tragedy too he played first characters. At the end of the season, he had Richard for his Benefit, which turned out well, being the only good one he ever had while in Biggs's Company. He actually cleared twenty-three pounds by it. How well he earned it, may be collected from the quantity of labour which fell to his share. That very night he played Richmond, Tressel, and Buckingham, besides a character in the afterpiece. How that was practicable it may puzzle those unacquainted with the arts of country companies to find out; but these things are easy enough to those who know how to do them. Whether the play be understood or not, is of little consequence to an audience of clodpoles. During this season, Warren had the advantage of constant practice in a vast variety of characters, and in the first line of business. In short, he played in every thing from Richard and Hamlet, to lord Minnikin and young Philpot.

From Warminster the company went to Frome, where they passed a miserable winter; thence to Bruton, and thence to Sher-

Digitized by Google

born, in Dorsetshire, playing at each place with no success, and without any occurrence worth relating save that at Bruton, where they played in a room in an inn, Biggs erected a hanging gallery, suspended from the ceiling in the manner of a hanging shelf in a larder or pantry; in the midst of the performance, the suspenders gave way, the gallery began to descend with a crash, and the people to save themselves, in their consternation leaped down, throwing all into the most ridiculous confusion. Luckily, however, no one was hurt.

While they were at Frome, an accident befel Warren, not less distressing, and indeed not less ridiculous than that which befel the knight of the Sorrowful Countenance, with his green stockings, while sojourning at the palace of the duke. There being no chimney in the theatre, which *autrefois* held hay for horses, being what is vulgarly called a stable loft, a stove was placed upon a large flag stone behind the scenes. Warren had only one pair of shoes, and those were of black calamanco. It being very wet and cold, he placed them on the flag for the benefit of the fire. When oh! horrible to relate, one of them took fire, and was burned to the very sole. His distress may well be imagined, when it is told, that there was not a shoe to be bought ready made in the town, and that he had three days to wait while a lazy fellow made a pair, for which our friend was sadly pinched to pay. The whole fruits of his success at Warminster having been consumed in repairing his wardrobe, and paying for his board for above four months, during which he received next to nothing from Biggs.

At Sherborn, where they remained four months, he, though a first performer, got so little, that he was not able to pay four shillings a week, the price of his bed and board. Still hope gleamed in his horizon, and he followed it; but as a great writer says "like the horizon it still flew away before him."—During this time many distresses occurred so severe, that he owns he would be afraid to relate them, as they would to many appear incredible, and indeed so ludicrous and out of the ordinary course of things, that they would incur the suspicion of being purposely fabricated for the joke's sake.

He now began to reflect seriously upon his situation, and thinking that he had sacrificed enough to honour, resolved to leave Biggs for ever: he had been about a year with him, and after

Digitized by Google

undergoing the want of every thing but necessary food, found himself without a shilling in his pocket. He therefore determined as soon as his benefit was over, to go to the town of Taunton, in Somersetshire, where he was told a company was performing with success, under Davis, commonly known by the name of Tag Davis. His benefit night at last arrived, and produced him about thirty shillings. After which he remained so long as it was necessary to perform for the benefits of the other actors, when he set off without communicating his intentions to Biggs, or to any of the rest of the company.

(To be continued.)

MISCELLANY.

For the Mirror of Taste.

ON NOVELS AND NOVEL READING.

The business of novel reading has been carried to an excess, which calls loudly for the consideration and interference of all those who value the happiness of themselves or of their offspring. That nineteen in twenty of the books so called are positively mischievous, is a proposition which could easily be demonstrated; that any of them are positively salutary, except under certain restrictions, may be very much doubted. As it is likely that this opinion will be called in question, it may not be amiss to establish it upon firm grounds of fact and reasoning.

If a novel be so perfectly natural as to give a true picture of life, it does no more for us than is already done to our hands in the ordinary incidents of the day that passes over us, and can afford no greater attraction, and very little, if any, more instruction than our usual commerce with the world will supply. If, on the other hand, it present an untrue picture of life, it imparts false and exaggerated notions, which are sure to mislead the understanding, and, possibly, corrupt the heart. One of the prominent evils of this kind of writing is, that it tends to fill young minds with fancies, wishes, hopes and expectations, which can never, in the natural course of

Digitized by Google

things, be gratified or accomplished. It excites fears where there are no dangers, hopes without possibility of fruition, and wishes without end, because without any object in existence. It presents a double picture of human condition; one a paradise, the other a hell; and when the person, who has been early trained to draw his stock of ideas of mankind from such descriptions, comes into the world, and looks at men as they really are, he sees no such beings as those he has been accustomed to expect. He cannot find among the worst such fiends, or among the best such angels, as those of whom he has been reading. He perceives the business of life going on in the natural way, with few incidents capable of deeply interesting his feelings, agitating his soul, heating his imagination, or violently affecting his heart. All then is disappointment; disgust succeeds; and, to the deep novel reader, this world and its uses "seem weary, flat, stale and unprofitable." In a word, all relish for the attainable enjoyments of life is lost in idle visions, and illusory expectations of what can never be found in existence.

The novel of Tom Jones may be fairly considered as the most natural extant: that is to say, as containing characters and incidents, which, less than those of any other, violate probability, or depart from the track of real life—such as bid fairer for being found in the course of social intercourse. Now let it be considered, what may be the consequences to a simple inexperienced mind of indulging in the reading of that fascinating work. The character of Jones is one which, as much as any we know of, in these volumes of fictitious history, a young lady of virtuous sensibility would be apt to take up in her imagination as the model of a perfect husband. With a handsome face, and a person at once elegant, vigorous and manly, the author has bestowed upon him courage, generosity, tenderness and benevolence; and in a word, every qualification of temper, mind and body, but prudence: a virtue, the last in rank, if indeed it holds any rank at all, in the estimation of a youthful fancy. On the other hand, he has given him none of those vices or foibles, which degrade the human character, or lower it in the general estimation of the world, and particularly of the young and inconsiderate. He has, it is true, qualified him with a dash of youthful frailty; but he has, at the same time, contrived to make it spring rather from the goodness of his heart than from depravity, or moral turpitude. In a word, taking that youth altogether, he is drawn a picture, of which, we venture to af-

Digitized by Google

firm, not one woman in ten thousand will find an original in real life. Whenever the young reader perceives a flaw in his character or conduct, her imagination helps her to patch it up in the picture which she forms to herself of him who is to be blessed with her affections. Possibly there is already some youth upon whom her imagination has been busy, and in whose person her mind's eye sees Tom Jones identified; if not, she is very likely to connect her idea of that captivating character with the first person who, in manners, temper, disposition, or any accidental circumstance, happens to bear a resemblance to the compound image already portrayed by the pen of FIELDING in her fancy. The more simple, sensible, and amiable she is, the more strong will be her tendency to become enamoured of this amiable object. She marries him; and now comes the sad reverse. He who perhaps would far exceed in every virtue, and every accomplishment, the sober expectations of a lady that had formed hers, not upon romance, but on real life, to our amiable, self-deceived, brings nothing but sad disappointment. She finds that a mere mortal man, just such as those who are usually born of woman, has fallen to her share; discontent and chagrin succeed; or at least disappointment sufficient to diminish the sober comforts, which, but for giving the rein to her simple overweening fancy, she might have enjoyed. The same will happen, of course, to those young men, who looking for nothing less than a Sophia Western, find a something not at all resembling her.

As novels present to the mind pictures too exaggerated and overcoloured, to convey just ideas of any thing in real life, the habits of thinking and estimating mankind, acquired from early reading them, are consequently unjust, so that the persons who read them much, can very seldom judge of their fellow creatures correctly, till they have had their erroneous imaginations (generally, too late) checked and rectified by experience. The novel reader stands a chance of being violently attracted to some new-fledged acquaintance, or without cause, disgusted with some inoffensive stranger. "That is a kind worthy creature," says he, "it is easy to see by his very looks, that there is much virtue in him; and then, his manners are irresistible;" "and that" thinks he of another, "that is a person to be avoided: he has something about him that tells one, he ought not to be trusted." Thus judgment and cool experiment are completely excluded, till when too late,

Digitized by Google

he repentantly finds, that he has lost a good friend by his rash decision, or has formed an intimacy, the ruinous effects of which, it is probable, time itself cannot entirely cure but with the help of the grave.

One of the greatest dangers, attending the too much reading of this kind of books, is the effect it has upon our sensibilities, those nice and delicate perceptions, by which we receive pleasure from beauty, and pain from deformity; those handmaids of taste, and, when under due regulation, those springs as well as balances of our best virtues; those quick feelings which alarm the mind of the possessor, at every deviation from rectitude, to which the man who has reflected but little, and received but few and shallow impressions of the principles of virtue and decorum, remains wholly insensible. These sensibilities, however, to be useful, must be well regulated; for if over exercised and stretched to an extreme, they are among the worst enemies of human happiness. Behaviour, harmless in itself, hurts the man of overstrained sensibility; he is as much disgusted with the coarse manners of an honest clown, as other men are at the turpitude of a wicked man; few things are good enough to satisfy his taste; in every dress there is something to hurt his eye; in every musical performance, something to jar upon his ear. He is so angry with the frailties, foibles, and vices of his fellow creatures, that he at last gets angry with and hates themselves. In writing, the style which rises not to the standard of perfection, previously fixed in his mind, though in other respects excellent, disgusts him; and to come to matters of much greater consequence, that sensibility, which, when raised only to its proper height, makes us feel for the miseries of others, and impels us to relieve their distress, when exerted to extreme, becomes so morbidly exquisite, as to make us shun the sight of misery, and shrink from our natural sympathy; thus counteracting the very end for which it is implanted in our nature, and, while depriving ourselves of happiness, preventing us from contributing to the good of others. Indeed there are abundant reasons to fear that it often serves as an apology to the person who labours under it, for not examining into the condition of the unhappy, and for withholding from them the relief which it is in his power to bestow.

The truth is, that the frequent perusal of pathetic compositions gradually diminishes the uneasiness which they are intended to excite. The repetition of fictitious scenes of misery renders the

Digitized by Google

heart callous to real distress, and to the comparatively trivial sufferings, which occur in the ordinary course of human affairs; and the over refined morbid delicacy, which results from those fictitious histories of elegant misery, and dignified distress, turns with disgust from the mean and loathsome circumstances concomitant with poverty and wretchedness, as they are generally found in life.

It is a fact, established by the concurrent testimony of those who have most deeply studied human nature as a science, that the indulgence of our passive perceptions prevents the full exercise of our active habits; and that while the former grow weaker by repetition, the latter acquire daily strength. Fictitious history gives no exercise whatsoever to our active habits: the scenes represented in it differ from those of real life in this essential point, that in the latter we proceed directly from the passive impression to those exertions which it is intended to produce, whereas in the former, that is in the contemplation of imaginary sufferings, we stop short at the impression, and there being no opportunity of carrying our benevolent feelings into effect, the uneasiness which we experience at the sight of distress, and which should prompt us to relieve it, is diminished, and along with it the habit of active beneficence, without which such dispositions are useless.

What is here said, is by no means intended to aim at the entire rejection of such works; but merely to point out the necessity of prescribing bounds to the use of them. The reader perhaps will smile when he is told that the time of life, when the reading of Novels is most likely to be noxious, is that in which they are read or rather devoured with greatest avidity; and that the time, at which only they can be entirely innoxious, is that period at which the relish for them, if it can be supposed to exist at all, is but moderate. When matured age, and sufficient intercourse with the world, have given correctness and stability to our judgment and opinions; when experience has measured out the limits to which the mind may venture to carry its hopes, wishes, and expectations, with a reasonable prospect of fruition; and when the picture, of what man really is, is so deeply traced in the judgment, that it cannot be wiped away by the illusory descriptions found in fictitious narratives, and which are generally those of what men *ought to be*, but seldom or never that of what they *are*, then the perusal of such works may be attended with advantage, as they

Digitized by Google

may serve to soothe the mind, to afford a temporary relief from those sorrows which, as certainly "as the spark flies upward," will mix with the happiest condition of man, to beguile away the heart from grief, distress, and discontent, and yield it up to a tender pleasing melancholy. If they are read even by the young, under the auspicious instruction of persons interested in their welfare, and qualified to point out their just application, they may be useful, being not a little conducive to elevation of mind, and to the cultivation of taste, and tending to invigorate and quicken the powers of moral perception. The point is, not to let an appetite for such works be carried too far, nor to misapply them so grossly, as to take them in lieu of experience, or to consider the incidents or characters they contain, as things to be met with in real life. But the most formidable objection to these works of fancy remains yet to be stated, and is of a nature so extremely important, that one would think it cannot fail, if gravely considered, to make an indelible impression upon the mind of every thinking parent. Not only our Divine Religion, but the naked and necessitous condition of "our shivering nature," teaches us, that when we come into life, we enter upon a state of trial, toil, and labour, which is only to end in the grave; and that trial is the basis of a final sentence, which will be passed upon us, to the alternative of either eternal felicity, or eternal sadness. Our education is a part of this trial, in which our progress and proceedings in the after part of life are arranged to more or less advantage, and on which our final success will greatly depend. It is, therefore, of the highest importance, not only to waste no time upon, but to form no taste for, any acquisitions which may not be converted to higher purposes than those of mere amusement. To make our trial the more difficult, nature has given us a reluctance to great exertions of mind, as well as of body, and, above all, a dislike to dry uninteresting instruction. Hence arises a fondness for works of fiction, which delight the fancy, while they hold out treacherous, delusive hopes, and presume to be vehicles of instruction, without, in the smallest degree, taxing the mind with industry or labour. But let it be recollected, that by indulging our natural relunctance to labour, we greatly increase its power, till its dominion over us becomes so complete, that those efforts, through the medium of which only, every thing that is worthy and substantially salutary can be obtained, become so wearisome, as not to be endured, and in fact, often at

Digitized by Google

last impracticable; while, on the other hand, the most laborious efforts become habitual to us by constant use, and so pleasant, as not to be relinquished without uneasiness. The study of the law, for instance, is a hard bit in the mouth of him who has early acquired a high relish for poetry, works of fancy, and nothing else. To transfer his taste from SHAKSPEARE to COKE, or even to BLACKSTONE, is a task of greater difficulty, than the generality of mankind are equal to; yet we find, that early habit, when uninterrupted by the seductive charms of those works of mere amusement, makes it, not merely a tolerable, but a delightful object of study. If then, to inure the mind to useful habits be conducive to the happy progress of our trial here, and to its issue hereafter, the reading of books merely pleasing to the fancy ought, at least, to be postponed till the habits of dry, industrious, intellectual labour shall have confirmed the mind in a taste for it, and made all that follows, easy and pleasant. The truth is, (a melancholy truth indeed) that the multitude of those frivolous books, with which the literature of the day is incumbered, have so completely extinguished a taste for truly valuable reading, so vitiated the judgment, and so betrayed the mind to frivolity and helpless vanity, that a book of real utility is seldom seen in the hands of young ladies, or (unfortunately, it may in too many cases be said) of young gentlemen either, who will yet pester you with a display of their great skill in language and style, and hold forth with confidence upon moral distinctions, which they have never perceived, or sentiments which they have never felt, and upon which men of severe study and matured judgments, would touch with reluctance, diffidence, and hesitation. Some who now live, and are not old, must remember the time when the number of novels being so few that they were quickly exhausted, history, excellent poetry, and the lighter ethics, afforded the customary relaxation to our females, in their leisure hours; and the window seat, the table, and the mantlepiece, where now the worthless novel holds an undisputed throne, were covered with those admirable works, the Spectator, Tatler, and Guardian, and others not less laudable. The attractions of young ladies then, were not confined to their personal charms, heightened by frivolous external accomplishments, and by those artful embellishments which dress, or the want of dress, is supposed to bestow; nor to the recital of some incident, piteous and unnatural as weakness and sensibility, degenerated into distraction, can

Digitized by Google

make it, taken from some fulsome novel; nor to the miserable imitation of some flippancy or folly—the leer, the affected languish, the yawn of feigned ennui, the soft and tender sigh, the pretty pet or pout, the pert titter, adopted from some imaginary countess, or other favourite character; the knowledge of young ladies then, was considerable, in some cases extensive, untainted with pedantry or conceit, and in general, abundantly adequate to all laudable and useful purposes; their moral sense and decorum were correspondent; and all was natural and consistent—neither affected, nor overstrained: without their being aware of it, a thousand loves lay in ambush behind their lips: wise and good men became at once their slaves and their protectors; the soul and the intellectual sense took the lead of the animal; and the idea of a sacred indissoluble union preceded personal wish. Even those whom age, infirmity, or prior union forbade to hope, could not help combining with such subjects, the highest idea of matrimonial bliss, and exclaiming, "Heavens what a wife will she make! how blest will be the man who obtains her hand!"

There is another, but it must be confessed, when compared with those, rather an inferior consideration—though it is not without its importance. It is this:—Of those novels ninety-nine in a hundred tend to deprave the style of those who study them as models, which very many do. In fact, what can be conceived more mischievous in literature, than false notions conveyed in vitious language; than things which have no existence, nor resemblance to any thing in existence, described in inflated bombast, and swelled into a marvellous size, with bloated fulsome expressions, destitute of grammatical correctness, destitute of syntactical connexion.

With all those sins upon their heads, however, novels will be read. Long before the time of life arrives, when such works cease to be mischievous, the control of parents over their children is in general, gradually resigned; and if they were willing, which, we fear, is not very often the case, they would not be able to direct them effectually to a proper use of their time, or a proper selection of books. For this reason, it will certainly be beneficial to society, to mark out those novels, as they come from the press, which appear least noxious, and most conducive to such advantages, as can be derived from that species of composition. Perhaps truth and candor will justify us in making a short list of exceptions to the

Digitized by Google

above observations; at the head of which we may place that unrivalled work of the inimitable Goldsmith, the Vicar of Wakefield. On this subject we shall say more hereafter.

(To be continued.)

ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS OF MASSINGER.

[Concluded.]

Our poet's writings are stored with fine sentiments; and the same observation, which has been made on Shakspeare's, holds true of our author: that his sentiments are so artfully introduced, that they appear to come uncalled, and to force themselves on the mind of the speaker. In the legendary play of *The Virgin Martyr*, Angelo delivers a beautiful sentiment, perfectly in the spirit of the piece:

> Look on the poor
> With gentle eyes; for in such habits, often,
> Angels desire an alms.

When Francisco, in *The Duke of Milan*, succeeds in his designs against the life of Marcelia, he remarks, with exultation, that

> When he's a suitor, that brings cunning arm'd
> With power, to be his advocates, the denial
> Is a disease as killing as the plague,
> And chastity a clue that leads to death.—Act 4. sc. 2.

Pisander, in *The Bondman*, moralizes on the insolence of the slaves to their late tyrants, after the revolt, in a manner that tends strongly to interest us in his character:

> Here they, that never see themselves, but in
> The glass of servile flattery, might behold
> The weak foundation upon which they build
> Their trust in human frailty. Happy are those
> That, knowing in their births, they are subject to
> Uncertain change, are still prepared, and arm'd
> For either fortune: a rare principle,
> And with much labour learn'd in wisdom's school!
> For, as these bondmen, by their actions, show
> That their prosperity, like too large a sail
> For their small bark of judgment, sinks them with
> A fore-right gale of liberty, ere they reach
> The port they long to touch at: so these wretches,
> Swollen with the false opinion of their worth,

Digitized by Google

And proud of blessings left them, not acquired;
That did believe they could with giant arms
Fathom the earth, and were above their fates,
Those borrow'd helps, that did support them, vanish'd,
Fall of themselves; and, by unmanly sufferings,
Betray their proper weakness.—Act 3. sc. 3.

His complaint of the hardships of slavery must not be entirely passed over:

The noble horse,
That, in his fiery youth, from his wide nostrils,
Neigh'd courage to his rider, and break through
Groves of opposed pikes, bearing his lord
Safe to triumphant victory; old or wounded
Was set at liberty, and freed from service.
The Athenian mules, that from the quarry drew
Marble, hew'd for the temples of the gods,
The great work ended, were dismiss'd, and fed
At the public cost; nay, faithful dogs have found
Their sepulchre; but man, to man more cruel,
Appoints no end to the sufferings of his slave.—*Id.* act 4. sc. 2.

The sense of degradation in a lofty mind, hurried into vice by a furious and irresistible passion, is expressed very happily in *The Renegado*, by Donusa:

What poor means
Must I make use of now! and flatter such,
To whom, till I betray'd my liberty,
One gracious look of mine would have erected
An altar to my service.—Act 2. sc. 1.

When Mathias, in *The Picture*, is informed by the magical skill of his friend, that his wife's honour is in danger, his first exclamations have at least as much sentiment as passion:

It is more
Impossible in nature for gross bodies,
Descending of themselves, to hang in the air;
Or with my single arm to underprop
A falling tower; nay, in its violent course,
To stop the lightning, than to stay a woman
Hurried by two furies, lust and falsehood,
In her full career of wickedness!

* * * * * *

I am thrown
From a steep rock headlong into a gulf

Digitized by Google

Of misery, and find myself past hope,
In the same moment that I apprehend
That I am falling.—Act 4. sc. 1.

But if Massinger does not always exhibit the liveliest and most natural expressions of passions; if, like most other poets, he sometimes substitutes declamation for those expressions, in description at least he puts forth all his strength, and never disappoints us of an astonishing exertion. We may be content to rest his character, in the description of passion, on the following single instance. In *The Very Woman*, Almira's lover, Caidenes, is dangerously wounded in quarrel, by Don John Antonio, who pays his addresses to her. Take, now, a description of Almira's frenzy on this event, which the prodigal author has put into the mouth of a chamber-maid:

If she slumber'd, straight,
As if some dreadful vision had appear'd,
She started up, her hair unbound, and, with
Distracted looks, staring about the chamber,
She asks aloud, *where is Martino? Where*
Have you conceal'd him? Sometimes names Antonio,
Trembling in every joint, her brows contracted,
Her fair face as 'twere chang'd into a curse,
Her hands held up thus; and, as if her words
Were too big to find passage through her mouth,
She groans, then throws herself upon her bed,
Beating her breast.—Act 2. sc. 3.

To praise or to elucidate this passage would be equally superfluous. I am acquainted with nothing superior to it in descriptive poetry; and it would be hardy to bring any single instance in competition with it. Our poet is not less happy in his descriptions of inanimate nature; and his descriptions bear the peculiar stamp of true genius in their beautiful conciseness. What an exquisite picture does he present in the compass of less than two lines!

Yon hanging cliff that glasses
His rugged forehead in the neighbouring lake.
Renegado, act 2. sc. 5.

Thus also Dorothea's description of Paradise:

There's a perpetual spring, perpetual youth:
No joint-benumming cold, or scorching heat,
Famine, nor age, have any being there.
The Virgin Martyr, act 4. sc. 3.

Digitized by Google

After all the encomiums on a rural life, and after all the soothing sentiments and beautiful images lavished on it, by poets who never lived in the country, Massinger has furnished one of the most charming unborrowed descriptions that can be produced on the subject:

> Happy the golden mean! Had I been born
> In a poor sordid cottage, not nurs'd up
> With expectation to command a court,
> I might, like such of your condition, sweetest,
> Have ta'en a safe and middle course; and not,
> As I am now, against my choice, compell'd
> Or to lie grovelling on the earth, or raised
> So high upon the pinnacles of state,
> That I must either keep my height with danger,
> Or fall with certain ruin.
>
> We might walk
> In solitary groves, or in choice gardens;
> From the variety of curious flowers
> Contemplate nature's workmanship and wonders:
> And then, for change, near to the murmur of
> Some bubbling fountain, I might hear you sing,
> And, from the well-tun'd accents of your tongue,
> In my imagination conceive
> With what melodious harmony a choir
> Of angels sing above their Maker's praises.
> And then with chaste discourse, as we return'd,
> Imp feathers to the broken wings of time:——
> * * * * * walk into
> The silent groves, and hear the amorous birds
> Warbling their wanton notes; here, a sure shade
> Of barren sycamores, which the all-seeing sun
> Could not pierce through; near that an arbor hung
> With spreading eglantines; there, a bubbling spring
> Watering a bank of hyacinths and lilies.
>
> The Great Duke of Florence, act 1. sc. 1. and act 4. sc. 2.

Let us oppose to these peaceful and inglorious images, the pic ture of a triumph, by the same masterly hand:

> When she views you,
> Like a triumphant conqueror, carried through
> The streets of Syracusa, the glad people
> Pressing to meet you, and the senators
> Contending who shall heap most honours on you;
> The oxen, crown'd with garlands, led before you,

Digitized by Google

Appointed for the sacrifice; and the altars
Smoking with thankful incense to the gods;
The soldiers chanting loud hymns to your praise;
The windows fill'd with matrons and with virgins,
Throwing upon your head, as you pass by,
The choicest flowers, and silently invoking
The queen of love, with their particular vows,
To be thought worthy of you.—The Bondman, act 3. sc. 4.

Every thing here is animated; yet every action is appropriate. A painter might work after this sketch, without requiring an additional circumstance.

The speech of young Charalois, in the Funeral Procession, if too metaphorical for his character and situation, is at least highly poetical:

How like a silent stream, shaded with night,
And, gliding softly with our windy sighs,
Moves the whole frame of this solemnity!
* * * *
Whilst I, the only murmurer in this grove
Of death, thus hollowly break forth.
The Fatal Dowry, act 2. sc. 1.

It may afford some consolation to inferior genius to remark, that even Massinger sometimes employs pedantic and overstrained allusions. He was fond of displaying the little military knowledge he possessed, which he introduces in the following passage, in a most extraordinary manner. One beautiful image in it must excuse the rest.

Were Margaret only fair,
The cannon of her more than earthly form,
Though mounted high, commanding all beneath it,
And ramm'd with bullets of her sparkling eyes,
Of all the bulwarks that defend your senses
Could batter none, but that which guards your sight.
But * * * * *
When you feel her touch, and breath
Like a soft western wind, when it glides o'er
Arabia, creating gums and spices;
And in the van, the nectar of her lips,
Which you must taste, bring the battalia on,
Well arm'd, and strongly lin'd with her discourse,
* * * * *
Hyppolitus himself would leave Diana,
To follow such a Venus.
A New Way to Pay Old Debts, act 3. sc. 1.

Digitized by Google

What pity that he should ever write so extravagantly, who could produce this tender and delicate image, in another piece:

> What's that? Oh, nothing but the whispering wind
> Breathes through yon churlish hawthorn, that grew rude,
> As if it chid the gentle breath that kiss'd it.
>
> The Old Law, act 4. sc. 2.

I wish it could be added to Massinger's just praises, that he had preserved his scenes from the impure dialogue which digusts us in most of our old writers. But we may observe, in defence of his failure, that several causes operated at that time to produce such a dialogue; and that an author, who subsisted by writing, was absolutely subjected to the influence of those causes. The manners of the age permitted great freedoms in language; the theatre was not frequented by the best company; the male part of the audience was by much the more numerous; and, what perhaps had a greater effect than any of these, the women's parts were performed by boys. So powerful was the effect of those circumstances, that Cartwright is the only dramatist of that age whose works are tolerably free from indecency. Massinger's error, perhaps, appears more strongly, because his indelicacy has not always the apology of wit; for, either from a natural deficiency in that quality, or from the peculiar model on which he had formed himself, his comic characters are less witty than those of his cotemporaries; and when he attempts wit, he frequently degenerates into buffoonery. But he has showed, in a remarkable manner, the justness of his taste, in declining the practice of quibbling; and as wit and a quibble were supposed, in that age, to be inseparable, we are perhaps to seek, in his aversion to the prevailing folly, the true cause of his sparing employment of wit.

Our poet excels more in the description than in the expression of passion. This may be ascribed, in some measure, to his nice attention to the fable: while his scenes are managed with consummate skill, the lighter shades of character and sentiment are lost in the tendency of each part of the catastrophe.

The prevailing beauties of his productions are dignity and elegance; their predominant fault is want of passion.

The melody, force and variety of his versification are every where remarkable. Admitting the force of all the objections which are made to the employment of blank verse in comedy, Massinger possesses charms sufficient to dissipate them all. It is indeed

Digitized by Google

equally different from that which modern authors are pleased to style blank verse, and from the flippant prose so loudly celebrated in the comedies of the day. The neglect of our old comedies seems to arise from other causes than from the employment of blank verse in their dialogue; for, in general, its construction is so natural, that, in the mouth of a good actor, it runs into elegant prose. The frequent delineations of perishable manners, in our old comedy, have occasioned this neglect; and we may foresee the fate of our present fashionable pieces, in that which has attended Jonson's, Fletcher's, and Massinger's: they are either entirely overlooked, or so mutilated, to fit them for representation, as neither to retain the dignity of the old comedy, nor to acquire the graces of the new.

The changes of manners have necessarily produced very remarkable effects on theatrical performances. In proportion as our best writers are further removed from the present times, they exhibit bolder and more diversified characters, because the prevailing manners admitted a fuller display of sentiments, in the common intercourse of life. Our own times, in which the intention of polite education is to produce a general uniform manner, afford little diversity of character for the stage. Our dramatists, therefore, mark the distinctions of their characters by incidents more than by sentiments; and abound more in striking situations than interesting dialogue. In the old comedy, the catastrophe is occasioned, in general, by a change in the mind of some principal character, artfully prepared, and cautiously conducted; in the modern, the unfolding of the plot is effected by the overturning of a screen, the opening of a door, or by some other equally dignified machine.

When we compare Massinger with the other dramatic writers of his age, we cannot long hesitate where to place him. More natural in his characters, and more poetical in his diction, than Jonson or Cartwright, more elevated and nervous than Fletcher, the only writers who can be supposed to contest his preeminence, Massinger ranks immediately under Shakspeare himself.

It must be confessed, that, in comedy, Massinger falls considerably beneath Shakspeare; his wit is less brilliant, and his ridicule less delicate and various; but he affords a specimen of elegant comedy,* of which there is no archetype in his great pre-

* The Great Duke of Florence.

Digitized by Google

decessor. By the rules of a very judicious critic,* the characters in this piece appear to be of too elevated a rank for comedy; yet, though the plot is somewhat embarrassed by this circumstance, the diversity, spirit and consistency of the characters render it a most interesting play.

In tragedy, Massinger is rather eloquent than pathetic; yet he is often as majestic, and generally more elegant than his master. He is as powerful a ruler of the understanding, as Shakspeare is of the passions. With the disadvantage of succeeding that matchless poet, there is still much original beauty in his works; and the most extensive acquaintance with poetry will hardly diminish the pleasure of a reader and admirer of Massinger.

OWENS, THE IRISH TRAGEDIAN.

JOHN LENNERGAN OWENS, actor, was born in Ireland, and was there esteemed the best Zanga that ever succeeded Mossop; but frequent intoxication prevented him from retaining his situation at the theatre. Having appeared one night in a state of inebriation while representing the character of Polydore,† (Orphan) the audience took an occasion, when he was alone on the stage, to express their indignation at his conduct by a loud *hiss*. Owens came forward, and looked at them with an *Ajax's* frown; then proceeding with his soliloquy,—"Here I'm alone and fit for mischief," put himself in the attitude of a pugilist. The audience's resentment was subdued by the rage of the actor. They joined in a universal laugh, and Owens was permitted to finish his character. This unfortunate attachment to liquor reduced him at last to ex-

* See the Essay on the Provinces of the Drama.

† This strange incident occurred the very night on which Mrs. Melmoth made her first appearance on the stage. The writer of this note was present. Mrs. Melmoth played Monimia for the benefit of her husband, Courtney Melmoth, who played Castalio. Of this lady we are desirous to give the public a true biographical account; because some writer, as unjustly as ignorantly, has misrepresented her in a London publication, stating, that in Dublin she went to mass in order to fill her house at her benefit. If the writer had known Dublin he would have known, as Mrs. Melmoth did, that going to mass there would rather injure than serve her in that way. If he knew herself, he would know that she was incapable of such impiety and meanness. Mrs. Melmoth was a sincere avowed catholic, in the very teeth of her interest.

Digitized by Google

treme poverty; and he latterly became a very beggar in the streets. At this time, not having played his favourite character for six years, he was struck upon reading Kemble's name in the bills for the part. He sighed; and meeting a person of decent appearance, implored pecuniary assistance. The gentleman was curious enough to inquire his name; upon which he replied, "Has six years' cruel absence extinguished majesty so far, that nought shines here to tell you *I'm the real Zanga?*—Yes, sir, John Lennergan Owens, successor to Henry Mossop." The gentleman, moved with compassion, gave him a trifle. Owens now hastened to get a morsel of dinner; but on his way was stopped by another mendicant, who implored *his* assistance. "I have but one shilling in the world," says he, "and that was given me this moment; however you shall have *half*." To his honour be it added, he stepped immediately into a public house, changed his shilling, and divided it with his *brother in affliction!*

THE EFFECT OF MUSIC ON DIFFERENT ANIMALS.

Those who pretend that the love of music, and especially instrumental music, is a natural instinct, say that even brute animals are sensible of it. One day when I was in the country, I resolved to try if it were true; and, while a person played upon a trump-marine properly tuned, I considered with attention the effect on a cat, a dog, a horse, an ass, a doe, some cows, some small birds, and a cock and hens; all which were in a court-yard, directly under a window out of which I leaned.

As for the cat, she did not seem to be at all sensible of the sound of the instrument; and to judge by her deportment, she would have given all the music in the world for a single mouse: she did not show the least mark of pleasure, but basked quietly in the sun. The horse stopped short before the window, and lifted up his head now and then, while he was grazing. The dog sat on his haunches like a monkey, keeping his eyes fixed all the time on the person who played. He continued in this attitude more than an hour, and seemed to comprehend what was going forward. The ass gave no token of sensibility, but kept on calmly eating his thistles. The doe raised her large ears, and seemed very attentive. The cows stopped a little, and, after having looked as if to see whether they knew us, went on their way. The small birds, some in an aviary, and others on the trees, seemed as if they would burst

Digitized by Google

themselves with singing. The cock, solely attentive to the hens, and the hens employed in scratching the ground, gave no indication that they received any pleasure from hearing a trump-marine.

Shakspeare, in the *Merchant of Venice*, thus describes the effect of music on horses:

> "Do but note a wild and wanton herd,
> Or race of youthful and unbridled colts,
> Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing round,
> Which is the hot condition of their blood;
> If they, perchance, but hear a trumpet sound,
> Or any air of music touch their ears,
> You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
> Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze,
> By the sweet power of music."

THE TRAVELLER.

An Oriental Apologue.

As soon as I perceived the first sparkling fires of day, I mounted my ass, and took the path which leads to the high road of Babylon; scarce was I there, when, in raptures, I exclaimed,

O how mine eyes do wander with joy o'er yon green hills! With what delicious perfumes do these flowery meadows embalm the air!

I am in a beautiful avenue; my ass and I may retire under the shade of the trees when it shall seem good unto us.

How serene the heavens! How fine a day! How pure the air I breathe! Well mounted as I am, I shall arrive before dusk.

Whilst I uttered these words, besotted with joy, I looked kindly down upon my ass, and gently stroking him:

From afar I see a troop of men and women, mounted upon beautiful camels, with a serious and disdainful air;

All clothed in long purple robes, with belos and golden fringes, interspersed with precious stones.

Their camels soon came up with me; I was dazzled by their splendor, and humbled by their grandeur.

Alas, all my endeavours to stretch myself served only to make me appear more ridiculously vain.

Mine eyes did measure them incessantly; scarce did my head reach their ancles; I was sorely vexed from the bottom of my soul: nevertheless did not give over following them.

Digitized by Google

Then did I wish that my ass could raise himself as high as the highest of their camels, and fain would I have seen his long ears peep over their lofty heads.

I continually incited him by my cries; I pressed him with my heels and my halter; and though he quickened his pace, yet six of his steps scarcely equalled one of the camels'.

In short we lost sight of them, and I all hopes of overtaking them. What difference, cried I, between their lot and mine! Why are they not in my place? or why am I not in theirs?

Wretch that I am! I sadly journey on alone, upon the vilest and the slowest of animals; they, on the contrary,—happy they!—would blush to have me in their train; so despicable am I in their eyes!

Busied in these reflections, and lost in thought, my ass, finding I no longer pressed him, slackened his pace, and presently stooped to feed upon the thistles.

The grass was goodly; it seemed to invite him to rest; so he laid him down; I fell; and, like unto him who, from a profound sleep, awaketh in surprise; so was I on a sudden awaked from my meditations.

As soon as I got up, the voice of thousands came buzzing in my ears: I looked around, and beheld a troop still more numerous than the former.

These were mounted as poorly as myself; their linen tunics the same as mine; their manners seemed familiar; I addressed the nearest.

Do your utmost, says I, you will never be able, mounted as you are, to overtake those who are a-head of you.

Let us alone, says he, for that; the madmen, they risk their lives; and for what? to arrive a few minutes before us.

We are all going to Babylon; an hour sooner or later, in linen tunic or purple robes, on an ass or a camel, what matters it when once one is arrived; nay, upon the road, so you know how to amuse yourself?

You, for example; what would have become of you had you been mounted on a camel! Your fall, says he, would have been fatal. I sighed, and had nothing to reply.

Then looking behind me, how great was my surprise to see men, women and children following us afoot, some singing, others skipping on the tender grass; their poor backs bowed under their burdens.

Then, cried I, transported beyond myself, they go to Babylon as

Digitized by Google

well as I: and is it they who rejoice? and is it I who am sad? when on a sudden my oppressed heart became light; and I felt a gentle joy flow within my veins.

Ere we got in, we overtook the first party; their camels had thrown them; their long purple robes, their belos and gold fringes interspersed with diamonds, were all covered with mud.

Then, ye powerful of the earth, even then it was I perceived the littleness of human grandeur; but the just estimation I made of it did not render me insensible to the misfortunes of others.

CHARACTER OF THE SPANISH NATION.

Some customs, and some traits of character, run through all the provinces. The national pride is every where the same. The Spaniard has the highest opinion of his nation and himself, which he energetically expresses in all his gestures, words and actions. This opinion is discovered in all ranks of life, and classes of society; among the great and the small; under the rags of poverty, as much as in the royal palaces. Its result is a kind of haughtiness, repulsive sometimes to him who is its object, but useful in giving to the mind a sentiment of nobleness and selfesteem, which fortifies it against all meanness.

The Spaniards are extremely reserved: they have little of those exterior demonstrations of that deceitful show, which is called politeness. They do not make advances to a stranger; they wait for him to begin; they watch his conduct; and do not give him their confidence till they think they know him. Their address is serious, cold, and sometimes even repulsive; but, under this unpromising exterior, they conceal a worthy heart, and a great disposition to oblige: they scatter around their benefits, without endeavouring to make a merit of them, and grant without having promised.

The Spaniard is very slow in all his operations. He often deliberates when he ought to act, and spoils affairs as much by his temporizing, as other nations do by precipitation. They have a proverb contrary to ours: they say, that one should never do today what may be put off till tomorrow. This slowness of the Spaniards appears incompatible with the vivacity of their imagination: it is the consequence of the distrust and circumspection that are national to them; but when their pride is irritated, their anger pro-

Digitized by Google

voked, or their generosity stimulated, they awake in a moment from their apathy, and are capable of the most violent and most noble actions.

RURAL FELICITY.

"HAPPY the man who leaves off trade,"
(Thus to himself Paul Poplin said,)
No care his mind engages;
Fix'd on a gently rising hill,
At Somerstown or Pentonville,
He eyes the passing stages.

The city rout, the lord mayor's ball,
The bankrupt meeting at Guildhall,
He cautiously avoids;
Nor when bold privateers invade
Our homeward bound West India trade,
Pays cent. per cent. at Lloyd's.

His Poplars, Lombardy's delight,
He ranges graceful to the sight,
Than mighty Magog taller;
And if one overtops his peers,
The overgrown intruder shears,
Or substitutes a smaller.

Pleas'd from his summerhouse to spy
The lowing herd to Smithfield hie,
To feed each London glutton;
His blushing elder-vine he brews,
To treat his city-friends, who choose
To taste his Sunday's mutton.

When Autumn rears his sunburnt head,
And plums his garden-wall o'erspread,
What joy rewards his labours!
First choosing for himself the best,
He civilly bestows the rest
Upon his next door neighbours.

Where glides old Middleton's canal,
He sometimes joins the motley mall,

Digitized by Google

And feasts on ale and fritters;
And when he nods in soft repose,
Responsive to his vocal nose,
The merry blackbird twitters.

When drifted snow ingulfs the house,
He hunts the weazle, rat, or mouse;
Or, with a net of bobbin,
Intraps the sparrow chirping brood,
And ofttimes, in a valiant mood,
Insnares the fierce red Robin.

But if, to grace his rural life,
He take unto himself a wife,
(No more a naughty ranger)
He marries one of honest kin,
Like Pamela, or void of sin
Like her who chose the stranger.

What more can mortal man desire,
An elbow chair, a blazing fire,
Two spermaceti tapers;
An appetite at five to dine,
A dish of fish, a pint of wine,
A leg of lamb and capers!

No turbot eighteen pence a pound
Should on my humble board be found,
No fricandeau or jelly;
No moor-game, dear and dainty breed,
Should fly from Berwick upon Tweed,
To roost within my belly.

I'd kill a pig—I'd drive a team—
I'd keep a cow to yield me cream,
More delicate than nectar;
O pure and innocent delight
To snatch the pigeon from the kite,
And—in a pie protect her!

And when the Hampstead stage I spied,
With six fat citizens inside,

Digitized by Google

Their daily labour over;
The horned herd I'd thus provoke—
"Fag on, obedient to the yoke,
Behold me safe in clover."

Paul Poplin, in a curious fuss,
A future Cincinnatus, thus
His honest pate was puzzling;
When lo! before his counter stands
A pursy widow, and demands
Six yards of ell-wide muslin!

He starts—displays the Indian ware,
His country box dissolves in air,
Like mists of morning vapour;
And, in the Poultry, Poplin still
Sticks to the shop, and eyes the till,
A smirking linendraper.

LINES

Upon seeing a beautiful infant sleeping on the bosom of its mother.

Upon its native pillow dear,
The little slumb'rer finds repose;
His fragrant breath eludes the ear,
A zephyr passing o'er a rose.

Yet soon from that pure spot of rest,
Love's little throne, shalt thou be torn;
Time hovers o'er thy downy rest
To crown thy baby brows with thorn.

Oh! thoughtless! couldst thou now but see
On what a world thou soon must move;
Or taste the cup prepar'd for thee
Of grief, lost hopes, or widow'd love;

Ne'er from that breast thou'dst raise thine head,
But thou would'st breathe to heav'n a prayer
To let thee in thy blossom fade,
And in a kiss to perish there.

Digitized by Google

FEMALE HEROISM.

About ten years ago, there lived at Vienna, a German Count, who had long entertained a secret amour with a young lady of considerable family. After a correspondence of gallantries, which lasted two or three years, the father of the young Count, whose family was reduced to a low condition, found out a very advantageous match for him, and made his son sensible that he ought in common prudence to close with it. The Count, upon the first opportunity, acquainted his mistress very fairly with what had passed, and laid the whole matter before her with such freedom and openness of heart, that she seemingly consented to it; she only desired of him, that they might have one meeting, before they parted forever.

The place appointed for this meeting was a grove, which stands at a little distance from the town. They conversed together in this place for some time, when on a sudden, the lady pulled out a pocket pistol, and shot her lover in the heart, so that he fell down dead at her feet. She then returned to her father's house, telling every one she met, what she had done. Her friends, upon hearing her story, would have found out means for her escape; but she told them, she had killed her dear Count, because she could not live without him, and that for the same reason, she was resolved to follow him by whatever way justice should determine. She was no sooner seized, but she avowed her guilt, rejected all excuses that were made in her favour, and begged that her execution might be speedy. She was sentenced to have her head cut off, and was apprehensive of nothing, but that the interest of her friends would obtain pardon for her. When the confessor approached her, she asked him where he thought the soul of her dear Count was? He replied, that his case was very dangerous, considering the circumstances in which he died. Upon this, so desperate was her phrensy, that she bid him leave her, for that she was resolved to go to the same place where the Count was. The priest was forced to give her better hopes of the deceased, (from a consideration that he was upon breaking off so criminal a commerce and leading a new life) before he could bring her mind to a temper fit for one, who was so near her end.

Upon the day of her execution, she dressed herself in all her ornaments, and walked towards the scaffold, more like an expect-

Digitized by Google

ing bride, than a condemned criminal. She was placed in a chair, according to the custom of that place; where after having stretched out her neck with an air of joy, she called upon the name of the Count, which was the signal appointed for the executioner, who with a single blow of his sword, severed her head from her body.

THOUGHTS ON CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS.

M. De Voltaire does not think two witnesses sufficient to prove the crime of a delinquent; and he alleges several cases, besides the famous and well known case of the daughter of Sirven, which seem to justify his opinion. A cabal, says he, of the populace of Lyons, declared in 1772, that they saw a company of young people carrying, amidst singing and dancing, the dead body of a young woman, whom they had violated and assassinated. The depositions of the witnesses to this abominable fact, or pretended fact, were unanimous; and, nevertheless, the judges acknowledged solemnly, in their sentence, that there had been neither singing nor dancing, nor girl violated, nor dead body carried. This may have been, in part, the fault of the judges, who, as our author insinuates, and even affirms in this work,* are in France often more corrupt and perfidious, than the witnesses. The case, indeed, of M. de Pivardiere is most singular, as it is almost incredible, and is nevertheless (according to our author) a public fact. Madame Chauvelin, his second wife, was accused of having had him assassinated in his castle. Two servant maids were witnesses of the murder: his own daughter heard the cries and last words of her father: 'My God! have mercy upon me!' One of the maid servants, falling dangerously ill, took the sacrament; and while she was performing this solemn act of religion, declared before God, that her mistress intended to kill her master. Several other witnesses testified, that they had seen linen stained with his blood; others declared, that they had heard the report of the gun, by which the assassination commenced. His death was averred: nevertheless, at length it appeared, that there was no gun fired, no blood shed, nobody killed. What remains is still more extraordinary: M. de la Pivardiere returned home; he appears in person before the judges of the province, who were preparing every thing to

* Prize of Justice and Humanity.

Digitized by Google

execute vengeance on his murderer. The judges are resolved not to lose their process; they affirm to his face, that he is dead; they brand him with the accusation of imposture for saying that he is alive; they tell him that he deserves exemplary punishment for coining a lie before the tribunal of justice; and maintain, that their procedures are more credible than his testimony. In a word, this criminal process continued eighteen months before the poor gentleman could obtain a declaration of the court "that he was alive."

M. de Voltaire relates several other instances of the criminal precipitation, or still more criminal iniquity, of the French tribunals, in condemning to death, in its most cruel forms, innocent, inoffensive, nay, virtuous citizens. The story of Monthaille, who without any accuser, witness, or any probable or suspicious circumstances, was seized by the superior tribunal of Arras, in 1770, and condemned to have his hand cut off, to be broken on the wheel, and afterwards burned alive, for killing his mother, is one of those horrors that astonish and counfound. This sentence was executed; and his wife was on the point of being thrown into the flames as his accomplice, when she pleaded her pregnancy, and gave the Chancellor of France, who was informed of this infernal iniquity, time to have the sentence reversed, when her husband had fallen a victim to the bloody tribunal of Arras. "The pen trembles in my hand," cries our author, "while I relate these enormities! We have seen by the letters of several French lawyers, that not one year passes, in which one tribunal or another does not stain the gibbet or the rack, with the blood of unfortunate citizens, whose innocence is afterwards ascertained, when it is too late."

LITERARY BLUNDERS.

The following is related of a French nobleman, by a learned lady. A young nobleman one day attempted to prove to me, that Seneca was contemporary with Henry the Fourth. To convince me that he was right, he produced the works of Seneca, dedicated to that prince, and showing me the title page, "See," says he, "is not here the name of Seneca, and immediately beneath it, that of Henry the Fourth? What have you to say now?" I told him, that this was a translation of the original author, made many ages after his death; but my assertion had little avail with him; he only

Digitized by Google

laughed at me, and affirmed, if I was not convinced, I certainly ought to be so, from what he had shown me.

Vicelius, a man in other respects not ignorant, believed, that Plutarch wrote the life and actions of Charles the Fifth, because the life of that monarch, in some Latin editions of Plutarch's works, is added at the end.

A Franciscan monk, resident at Porto Bello, in the East Indies, who asserted, of some copies of Ovid's Metamorphoses, that they were English Bibles; and showing his audience the engravings, "See," said he, "how those abominable wretches worship the devil, whilst he changes them into beasts."

Proba Falconia, a very illustrious female, wrote what she termed, "Centones Virgiliani," on certain parts of Scripture. By the blunders of printers, she was called, "Proba Falconia Centona," which error is to be seen in the edition of the work printed at Paris, in 1509, the title of which runs thus: "Probæ Falconiæ Centonæ clarissimæ fœminæ," &c.

ANECDOTES.

Earl of Ormond. When Lord Strafford was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he made an order that no peer should be admitted into the House of Lords in that kingdom, without leaving his sword with the doorkeeper. Many peers had already complied with this insolent order, when the Duke, then Earl of Ormond, being asked for his sword, he replied to the doorkeeper, "If you make that request again, Sir, I shall plunge my sword into your body." Lord Strafford hearing this, said, "This nobleman is a man that we must endeavour to get over to us."

A *legal* gentleman of the Temple, who for a considerable time paid his addresses to the daughter of a bookseller in Holborn, was a few days ago forbidden the house, on which he immediately sent in a bill of ninety-one pounds thirteen shillings and four pence, for *two hundred* and *seventy-five* attendances, advising on family affairs, &c.

Digitized by Google

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

THEATRICAL JOURNAL.

For February, 1811.

1	Friday 1st,	The Revenge—(Zanga by a gentleman, his first appearance on any stage.)—The Lady of the Rock.
2	Saturday 2d,	George Barnwell.—Columbus.
3	Monday 4th,	Distressed Mother.—A Recitation.—A Budget of Blunders. For the benefit of Mr. Fennell.
4	Wednesday 6th,	The Doubtful Son.—Irishman in London.
5	Friday 8th,	De Monfort.—The Forty Thieves. For the benefit of Mr. Wood.
6	Saturday 9th,	The Foundling of the Forest.—A Budget of Blunders.
7	Monday 11th,	Venice Preserved—(Pierre by the gentleman who played Zanga.)—The Irish Widow.
8	Wednesday 13th,	The Doubtful Son.—Blue Beard.
9	Friday 15th,	The Robbers.—Ella Rosenberg.
10	Saturday 16th,	The Doubtful Son.—La Foret Noire, a pantomime.
11	Monday 18th,	The Deserted Daughter.—Matrimony—and various entertainments. For the benefit of Mr. Jefferson.
12	Wednesday 20th,	The Foundling of the Forest.—A Recitation.—Adopted Child. For the benefit of Mr. and Mrs. Barrett.
13	Friday 22d,	Abaelino, the Great Bandit.—The Tale of Terror. For the benefit of Mr. Cone.
14	Saturday 23d,	The Stranger.—Oscar and Malvina. For the benefit of Mr. Francis.
15	Monday 25th,	The Wheel of Fortune.—Recitations.—Valentine and Orson. For the benefit of Mr. M'Kenzie.
16	Wednesday 27th,	The Road to Ruin.—Dr. Last's Examination.—A Budget of Blunders. For the benefit of Mr. Blissett.

THE limits prescribed to the bulk of this work rendering it impracticable to include, in any single number, the whole of the critical observations demanded by the performances of one month, we are reduced to the necessity of reserving the greater part to be continued during the theatrical recess. In the mean time, we

Digitized by Google

select for the numbers of the current months those parts of the transactions of our stage which, by their novelty or prominence, lay more particular claim to attention. Conformably to this plan, we have already followed Mrs. Beaumont through several of her characters; in the course of which so much has been said of that lady, that our opinions respecting her talents, in general, are perhaps as well understood as if we were to devote a volume to the subject. In the characters to which we have not yet adverted, her merits and defects, her beauties and eccentricities, were pretty nearly of the same kind as those we have already particularized. In all the parts she has yet gone through, her portraits were nearly akin, and bore one leading family feature: the materials precisely the same, though mixed up perhaps in different proportions. As we make it a rule not to speak of any actor, whose performances we cannot approve, we have nothing to say respecting Mr. Beaumont, but that a fine person and a manly face seem to be his only requisites for the stage. It will become our duty again perhaps to advert to Mrs. Beaumont, when we return to a discussion of the performances, in their regular order: in the mean time a strict conformity to our plan calls upon us to introduce our readers to the gentleman who made his first appearance on any stage in the character of ZANGA.

This gentleman, whose name is CALBRAITH, though, by birth an Irishman, has lived so long in this city, and has "even from his boyish days," been so well known to its inhabitants, that he may be called a child of Philadelphia. Very early in life, and at a time when the affluence of his father precluded the idea of his ever going on the stage, he disclosed talents which pointed it out as his natural walk in life. As he grew up, those indications grew stronger; and when certain family occurrences took place, which rendered it necessary for him to pursue some kind of profession, in order to obtain an establishment, his intimate friends and the companions of his social hours, unanimously marked out the stage as that for which nature had designed him. In all their calculations upon the subject, however, the idea of tragedy never entered into their heads; of his enlisting himself under the banners of Melpomene, he himself alone entertained a conception: and such was the opinion with which his comic powers had inspired his acquaintances, that, when his appearance in the character of Zanga was announced, their partiality could not prevent the far

Digitized by Google

greater number of them from foreboding, if not a total failure, at least such a falling off from his natural course, as could not fail to operate to his disadvantage. How far they were mistaken he demonstrated on the first night of his appearance.

If the talents of a performer may be estimated by the measure of a compound ratio of the difficulties belonging to the part he plays and his success in playing it, that measure will be more particularly applicable to a performer on his first appearance. It would, therefore, be doing great injustice to the object of our present criticism if we were to enter upon an examination of his performance of Zanga, without first investigating that character and unfolding the difficulties which, from the structure of the tragedy to which it belongs, beset the performer who attempts to personate it.

In the first place, the obvious similitude and, at the same time, the great inferiority of the tragedy of "The Revenge" to Shakspeare's Othello, operates greatly to the injury of the former, and diminishes the relish with which a play of equal merit would be tasted if unfoiled by so very disadvantageous a comparison. In the next place, the dialogue, being very much composed of long and laboured speeches, hangs with a dead weight upon the performer, and, though the lines in general be vigorous and smooth, becomes tiresome to an audience in almost every scene;—what is worse, the wearisome heaviness of the dialogue is not relieved by a proper share of incident, or even by an ordinary portion of variety in the scenes.

Nor are those the only difficulties which the performer of Zanga has to encounter. He receives no relief from the other characters, who are so uninteresting, and so feebly drawn, that the play may be said to rest, with all its cumbersome weight, upon the sole support of Zanga; who, after all, has, in the second, third and fourth acts, very little upon which an actor can display his talents to any great purpose of effect or interest. In the first and in the last act there are some very brilliant effusions of genius; but they are of a nature which require an energy of action and utterance, together with a wildness of expression, under the correction of a strict propriety, which more than any other association of qualities is difficult to be found in an actor, and which we firmly believe Mossop alone ever fully possessed.

When those who have witnessed Mr. Calbraith's personation of

Digitized by Google

Zanga therefore shall have duly weighed the nature of the undertaking, they cannot but concur with us in thinking, that it was, *as a first appearance*, a very extraordinary effort. What renders it more so is, that in almost every scene he betrayed evident marks of a too hasty and careless study of the speeches. The words were in some few places dislocated; and in others, the meaning was not emphatically nor judiciously marked. On the other hand, some lines were enforced with much beauty and effect. Such was his speech, in the first scene of the first act, in answer to Isabella, when she intreats him to tell his story with more temper.

> *Yes, woman, with the temper that befits it.*
> *Has the dark adder venom? So have I*
> *When trod upon. Proud Spaniard, thou shalt feel me!*
> From that day, that day of my dishonour,
> I from that day have cursed the rising sun
> Which never failed to tell me of my shame.
> I from that day have blest the coming night,
> Which promised to conceal it; but in vain;
> *The blow returned for ever in my dream.*

In this speech, which he spoke with great force and correctness, the lines printed in italics claimed particular praise for their superior force, propriety and spirit. Nor in the lines further on in the same speech,

> " By nightly march he purpos'd to surprise
> The Moorish camp: but *I have taken care*
> *They shall be ready to receive his favour,*"

were the words in italics less deserving of applause.

In the second scene of the first act too, his exclamation

> " Had'st thou a thousand lives, thy death would please me,"

was thrown out with a vehemence and, at the same time, a degree of correctness, which could hardly have been expected from a person labouring under the horrors of a first appearance.

Although the whole interval between the first and last acts affords little scope for an actor, unless, like the great man already mentioned, he had the power to commute the very dross of the poet into gold, still there were passages in which Mr. Calbraith acquitted himself in a manner that gave pleasure to his friends. When Isabella informs him that the time of Don Carlos's arrival was

Digitized by Google

"two nights ago,"—the lively exultation and diabolical joy with which he rapidly exclaimed

> "That was the very night
> Before the battle"—

and then, lowering his voice, said

> "Memory set down that;
> It has the essence of the crocodile,"

were so happily characteristic of the Moor's heart and purpose, that the dullest comprehension must have received a strong impression of the character.

The second scene of the fifth act is the great test of the performer's talents for Zanga; and here it was that Mr. Calbraith displayed his, with most effect and applause. It was evident that he had more carefully studied it; and he was, besides, a little more than he had before been, relieved from the pressure of timidity. In a word, he so successfully exerted himself in that trying scene, that every speech received the most unqualified testimony of approbation. The curtain fell amidst repeated vollies of applause, and every one owned that Mr. Calbraith's was a very extraordinary first appearance.

Mr. CALBRAITH'S PIERRE.

On the eleventh of February (ten days after his appearance in Zanga) Mr. Calbraith again came forward, in the character of Pierre; in which he manifested powers which, *if properly exercised*, cannot fail to raise him in time to a very respectable rank in his profession. Pierre, being a character which requires a more perfect familiarity with stage business than Zanga does, his action was not so easy nor so appropriate, and he betrayed in it a still greater negligence of previous study: yet there were many very laudable passages, some of considerable felicity, and one or two readings which to us appeared quite new and very happily conceived. One of these was on his first entrance, when Pierre addresses Jaffier,

> "My friend, good morrow;
> How fares the honest partner of my heart?
> What, melancholy? Not a word to spare me?"

he did not put it interrogatively, "What, melancholy?—not a word to spare me?"—but in an exclamation of friendly raillery, "What! melancholy!—not a word to spare me!" which being con-

Digitized by Google

sonant to the character and purpose of Pierre, and to the affected pleasantry of temper with which he rallies the notion of honesty, in the following speech, was well imagined, and certainly had a very agreeable effect.

The next was his reply to Jaffier, when the latter mournfully exclaims

" And now thank heaven!"

Calbraith, instead of replying in the ordinary way,

Thank heaven!—for what?

breaks in abruptly with the full question

Thank heaven for what?

Whether the latter was the reading meant by the author, or not, we will not waste time on discussing; but of the effect it produced we are convinced not only by our own feelings, but by the marked approbation of the audience. Through the whole of that scene he acquitted himself handsomely; though his want of stage business was rendered more conspicuous than it need have been, by the dress he wore, which was little more fit for Pierre than for Hamlet, Macbeth, Shylock, or sir John Falstaff.

In a character, the performance of which depends so much, as that of Pierre does in certain scenes, upon a perfect knowledge and habitual practice of stage business, it would be unfair to deal strictly with a candidate for public favour on his second appearance. We shall only say, therefore, that in Mr. Calbraith's action there was much which might be mended, and which, we are persuaded, he will mend. Where action is imperfect, it should be called upon as little as possible. Nothing but length of time, and long, laborious practice can ever impart the kind of action that is adapted to the stage; and which is by no means the same that is considered elegant deportment in private life. The discourse of Dr. Johnson was not farther removed from the easy elegance of conversation in polished society, than the best action of the stage is from the easy deportment of the drawing room. This, therefore, is one of the qualifications which an actor must learn after he has gone upon the stage—being entirely out of his habits before. We, therefore, strenuously recommend it to all young actors, and particularly to those men of genius, who have much to lose, to be as sparing as possible of action till they have acquired that smoothness which practice only can im-

Digitized by Google

part. That astonishing actor we have already more than once mentioned (Mossop, the first Zanga) was so convinced of this truth, that for four or five years, he seldom brought his left arm into action.—This it was which gave rise to the malignant Churchill's sneer upon him.

> While the mouth measures words with greater skill,
> The right hand labours, and the left lies still;
> For he resolves on scripture grounds to go
> What the right doth, the left hand shall not know.

Mr. Calbraith appears to have a just notion of the advantage of what is called *by-play;* and considering the novelty of his situation, he was sometimes fortunate in his attempts, particularly in the conversation between Alonzo and Don Carlos in the Revenge. Yet as it is a dangerous experiment and one which, if unluckily executed, does more to detract from other excellence than any occasional success in it can do good; and as being sparing of it, if it do nothing else will mark a certain degree of diffidence, (than which nothing can be more interesting or winning on the esteem of the audience), we have always done our best to recommend it to young performers. A little attention to this recommendation would make Mr. Calbraith's action very much superior to that of any beginner we have yet seen.

It would be injustice to this gentleman, not to say that in many critical scenes, he showed that he understood his author well, and that in delivering the dagger to Jaffier and saying,

> Take it—farewell—for now I owe thee nothing.

he was, beyond our expectation, correct and striking.

With respect to his stage business, Mr. Calbraith has yet much to learn. His person, though full, is well proportioned and favourable to him. His face though not very striking, is not objectionable. His voice, though clear in its extent, strong when exerted, and fit for the lively and the light, is deficient of compass in descent, and wanting the deep and lower tones is inadequate to the expression of solemnity, and to under-speaking. It is fitter for Lothario than Richard or Macbeth, but equal to all the purposes of comedy.

Yet, upon the whole, we hazard nothing in asserting, that Mr. Calbraith has talents which nothing but neglect can prevent from placing him in a very high and reputable rank in his profession. Neglect such as if he were capable of it, would be unpardonable in the highest degree.

Digitized by Google

DE MONFORT,

A TRAGEDY, BY JOANNA BAILLIE.

[Continued from page 60.]

In the first scene a light is thrown upon the extraordinary character of De Monfort, by a conversation between his servant Manuel and old Jerome.

De Monfort has scarcely been seated in his new residence, when he is unexpectedly visited by the Count and Countess Freberg, who, having seen his servant at the gate, resolve to enter and welcome him. The count runs with an ardour that indicates familiarity as well as affection, to embrace him, but is received in a manner which, notwithstanding De Monfort's efforts to conceal his feelings, manifests a repugnance to meet him. After inquiry for the lady Jane, to which the other gives an evasive answer, the count and countess take their leave, first extorting from him a promise that he will visit them, and promising that he will collect some cheerful friends to dissipate the melancholy, which they perceive hanging over him.

Freberg. We'll reestablish thee: we'll banish pain.
I will collect some rare, some cheerful friends,
And we shall spend together glorious hours,
The gods might envy. Little time so spent,
Doth far outvalue all our life beside.
This is indeed our life, our waking life,
The rest dull breathing sleep.

De Monfort. Thus, it is true, from the sad years of life
We sometimes do short hours, yea minutes strike,
Keen, blissful, bright, never to be forgotten;
Which, through the dreary gloom of time o'erpast,
Shine like fair sunny spots on a wild waste.
But few they are, as few the heaven-fir'd souls
Whose magic power creates them. Bless'd art thou,
If, in the ample circle of thy friends,
Thou canst but boast a few.

Freb. Judge for thyself: in truth, I do not boast.
There is amongst my friends, my later friends,
A most accomplish'd stranger. New to Amberg;
But just arriv'd, and will ere long depart.
I met him in Franconia two years since.
He is so full of pleasant anecdote,

Digitized by Google

So rich, so gay, so poignant is his wit,
Time vanishes before him as he speaks,
And ruddy morning through the lattice peeps
Ere night seems well begun.
De Mon. How is he call'd?
Freb. I will surprise thee with a welcome face:
I will not tell thee now.

The count and countess being gone, De Monfort gives vent to his feelings in a soliloquy, which, by exhibiting the strange alienation of his temper, even from the offices of sincere friendship and politeness, prepares us for the more gloomy appearances which follow.

De Mon. Well, well, prepare my bed; I will to rest.
I know not how it is, my heart stands back,
And meets not this man's love.—Friends! rarest friends!
Rather than share his undiscerning praise
With every table wit, and book-form'd sage,
And paltry poet puling to the moon,
I'd court from him proscription, yea, abuse,
And think it proud distinction.

We next meet De Monfort at breakfast, the morning after his arrival; when, sleep having a little restored his natural temper, he speaks with great kindness to his servant Manuel. Here we begin to observe that every line, as the piece advances, tends to elucidate the character of the hero; and that scenes, at first apparently trivial, answer the important purpose of unfolding, in the most natural manner possible, the rooted sorrow that lies near his heart, and insensibly revealing the cause of it. Even while felicitating himself upon his retreat, he adverts in bitter terms to the evil he has fled from, and shows that it reigns in his mind paramount to all other considerations.

De Mon. Here can I wander with assured steps,
Nor dread, at every winding of the path,
Lest an abhorred serpent cross my way,
To move— [*Stopping short.*
Man. What says your honour?
There are no serpents in our pleasant fields.
De Mon. Think'st thou there are no serpents in the world,
But those who slide along the grassy sod,
And sting the luckless foot that presses them!
There are, who, in the path of social life,
Do bask their spotted skins in fortune's sun,

Digitized by Google

And sting the soul—Ay, till its healthful frame
Is chang'd to secret, fest'ring, sore disease,
So deadly is the wound.
Man. Heaven guard your honour from such horrid skathe!
They are but rare, I hope?
De Mon. [*Shaking his head.*] We mark the hollow eye, the wasted frame,
The gait disturb'd, of wealthy honour'd men,
But do not know the cause.
Man. 'Tis very true. God keep you well, my lord!
De Mon. I thank thee, Manuel, I am very well.
I shall be gay too by the setting sun.
I go to revel it with sprightly dames,
And drive the night away.

This dark superinduced feature of De Monfort's character being thus partially exposed, the poet, by a transition exquisitely fine and natural, contrives to make him, with the aid of Manuel, display some of its brighter natural traits.

Man. I should be glad to see your honour gay.
De Mon. And thou too shalt be gay. There, honest Manuel,
Put these broad pieces in thy leathern purse,
And take at night a cheerful jovial glass.
Here is one too, for Bremer; he loves wine;
And one for Jaques: be joyful all together.

That the author of this tragedy possesses the happy power of so mingling and disposing the lights and shades of character, as to produce a perfect and intelligible picture, in a degree superior to any modern poet, we need not offer any stronger proof than this single scene. First, De Monfort appears wrapt in the indulgence of his gloomy, hateful feelings; then he gradually slides into his own noble natural temper; from which he is suddenly roused back again to all the scorpion stings of his former thoughts, by a circumstance which, though natural and simple, is admirably conducive to the progress of the plot. It is thus, by a skilful disposition of the parts, and the quick, yet easy and unforced alternation of the two contrasted characteristics of his heart, she gradually develops and throws out into full relief the whole man. While he is flattering himself with the hope of enjoying a suspension of his tortures, by distance from the causer of it, a servant enters, and, with a word, shows him the fallacy of his expectations, and gives us the first glance of the person he detests.

Digitized by Google

Serv. My lord, I met e'en now, a short way off,
Your countryman, the Marquis Rezenvelt.
De Mon. [*Starting from his seat, and letting the cup fall from his hand.*] Who, say'st thou?
Serv. Marquis Rezenvelt, an' please you.
De Mon. Thou ly'st—it is not so—it is impossible!
Serv. I saw him with these eyes, plain as yourself.
De Mon. Fool! 'tis some passing stranger thou hast seen,
And with a hideous likeness been deceiv'd.
Serv. No other stranger could deceive my sight.
De Mon. [*Dashing his clenched hand violently upon the table, and overturning every thing.*] Heaven blast thy sight! it lights on nothing good.
Serv. I surely thought no harm to look upon him!
De Mon. What, dost thou still insist? Him must it be?
Does it so please thee well? [SERVANT *endeavours to speak.*] Hold thy damn'd tongue!
By Heaven I'll kill thee! [*Going furiously up to him.*
Man. [*In a soothing voice.*] Nay, harm him not, my lord; he speaks the truth;
I've met his groom, who told me certainly
His lord is here. I should have told you so,
But thought, perhaps, it might displease your honour.

Here the first clear view of the person that disturbs his peace breaks upon us; but only to light us to a more dark and inexplicable mystery. We see that he not only abhors this marquis Rezenvelt, but that he has such a secret dread of meeting him, that, in his consternation, he almost stoops to the meanness of striking his servant for intimating that the marquis is in the same town with him. Having made De Monfort thus disclose himself, the poet artfully turns the tempest of the unhappy victim's mind to another point, and makes him accompany the development with strong indications of conscious shame for the unworthiness of his feelings.

De Mon. [*Becoming all at once calm, and turning sternly to* MANUEL.]
And how dar'st thou think it would displease me?
What is't to me who leaves or enters Amberg?
But it displeases me, yea, ev'n to frenzy,
That every idle fool must hither come
To break my leisure with the paltry tidings
Of all the cursed things he stares upon.
[SERVANT *attempts to speak*—DE MONFORT *stamps with his foot.*]

Digitized by Google

Take thine ill favour'd visage from my sight,
And speak of it no more. [*Exit* SERVANT.
And go thou too; I choose to be alone.
[*Exit* MANUEL.—DE MONFORT *goes to the door by which they went out; opens it, and looks.*
But is he gone indeed? Yes, he is gone.
[*Goes to the opposite door, opens it, and looks: then gives loose to all the fury of gestures, and walks up and down in great agitation.*
It is too much: by Heaven, it is too much!
He haunts me—stings me—like a devil haunts—
He'll make a raving maniac of me—Villain!
The air wherein thou draw'st thy fulsome breath
Is poison to me—Oceans shall divide us! [*Pauses.*
But no; thou think'st I fear thee, cursed reptile!
And hast a pleasure in the damned thought.
Though my heart's blood should curdle at thy sight,
I'll stay and face thee still. [*Knocking at the chamber door.*
Ha! Who knocks there?

While every string of the unhappy De Monfort's heart is thus untuned and unfitted for harmony, the count Freberg enters; and, perceiving his agitation, entreats him to open his heart to him, and this draws from De Monfort some observations on the fallaciousness of mankind, not less just and true than vigorously expressed.

Freb. What troubles thee?
De Mon. I have no grief: distress me not, my friend.
Freb. Nay, do not call me so. Wert thou my friend,
Wouldst thou not open all thine inmost soul,
And bid me share its every consciousness?
De Mon. Freberg, thou know'st not man; not nature's man,
But only him who, in smooth studied works
Of polish'd sages, shines deceitfully
In all the splendid foppery of virtue.
That man was never born whose secret soul,
With all its motley treasure of dark thoughts,
Foul fantasies, vain musings, and wild dreams,
Was ever opened to another's scan.
Away, away! it is delusion all.

When count Freberg has got De Monfort into a more placid mood, he reminds him of his promise, invites him to come along with him, and says

I'll introduce you to my pleasant friend.
De Mon. Your pleasant friend?
Freb. Yes, him of whom I spake. [*Taking his hand.*

Digitized by Google

There is no good I would not share with thee,
And this man's company, to minds like thine,
Is the best banquet-feast I could bestow.

In this description a profound knowledge of the most secret avenues, by which the human heart may be surprised and overcome, is displayed. Indeed we are not sure that the manner, in which Shakspeare contrives to make Iago feed the flame of Othello's rage, shows more poetic art and ingenuity than Miss Baillie evinces in raising the expectation of De Monfort by those praises of the person to be introduced to him, and then letting fall upon him the dreadful intelligence—more dreadful for being unexpected,

"It is thy townsman, noble Rezenvelt,"

the man whom he most abhors; and the praises of whom is poison to his soul. Accordingly he shows how deeply he is affected, snatches his hand hastily from Freberg, and shrinks back. Here a scene ensues of great importance, as it demonstrates that De Monfort is conscious of the unworthiness of his feelings, and so ashamed of, that he meanly disavows, them.

Freb. Ha! What is this? Art thou painstricken, Monfort?
Nay, on my life, thou rather seem'st offended:
Does it displease thee that I call him friend?
De Mon. No, all men are thy friends.
Freb. No, say not all men. But thou art offended.
I see it well. I thought to do thee pleasure;
But if his presence is not welcome here,
He shall not join our company to-day.
De Mon. What dost thou mean to say? What is't to me
Whether I meet with such a thing as Rezenvelt
To-day, to-morrow, every day, or never?
Freb. In truth, I thought you had been well with him.
He prais'd you much.
De Mon. I thank him for his praise—Come, let us move:
This chamber is confin'd and airless grown. [*Starting.*
I hear a stranger's voice?
Freb. 'Tis Rezenvelt.
Let him be told that we are gone abroad.
De Mon. [*Proudly.*] No! let him enter. Who waits there? Ho! Manuel!

Enter MANUEL.

What stranger speaks below?
Man. The Marquis Rezenvelt.

Digitized by Google

I have not told him that you are within.
De Mon. [*Angrily.*] And wherefore didst thou not? Let him ascend.

The character of Rezenvelt is well drawn; but with a degree of point far subordinate to that of De Monfort. It serves to show, however, that Thalia has not been niggard of her gifts to the lady who draws it. Rezenvelt's careless gaiety, lively humor, and turn to *badinage*, are finely contrasted with the serious cast and moody melancholy of De Monfort. As a moral character, too, he is advantageously opposed to the other; and, on his first entrance, recommends himself to our regards by the guileless, affable and friendly manner in which he advances to De Monfort, and gives him a cordial welcome; for which the other thanks him with repulsive, cold reluctance. In the conversation that ensues, De Monfort more fully discloses his abominable antipathy; and, when left to himself, gives vent to his rancor, and lays still more bare the morbid state of his heart.

Hell hath no greater torment for th' accurs'd
Than this man's presence gives—
Abhorred fiend! he hath a pleasure too,
A damned pleasure, in the pain he gives!
Oh! the side glance of that detested eye!
That conscious smile! that full insulting lip!
It touches every nerve: it makes me mad.
What, does it please thee? Dost thou woo my hate?
Hate shalt thou have! determin'd, deadly hate,
Which shall awake no smile. Malignant villain!
The venom of thy mind is rank and devilish,
And thin the film that hides it.
Thy hateful visage ever spoke thy worth:
I loath'd thee when a boy.
That —— should be besotted with him thus!
And Freberg likewise so bewitched is,
That, like a hireling flatt'rer, at his heels
He meanly paces, off'ring brutish praise.
Oh! I could curse him too.

In the second act the lady Jane De Monfort is introduced with every advantage which the finest poetical description can lend to personal excellence. Between Mrs. Siddons, who acted the character, and the description of Jane, the resemblance is so strong, that it is with reason supposed she sat to Miss Baillie for the pic-

Digitized by Google

ture. It is the more striking too, for coming in detached pieces from the mouth of a simple page, who hastily announces her arrival.

Lady Freb. How looks her countenance?
Page. So queenly, so commanding, and so noble,
I shrunk at first, in awe; but when she smil'd,
For so she did, to see me thus abash'd,
Methought I could have compass'd sea and land,
To do her bidding.
Lady. Is she young or old?
Page. Neither, if right I guess, but she is fair;
For time hath laid his hand so gently on her,
As he too, had been aw'd.
Lady. The foolish stripling!
She has bewitch'd thee. Is she large in stature?
Page. So stately, and so graceful is her form,
I thought at first her stature was gigantic,
But on a near approach I found, in truth,
She scarcely does surpass the middle size.
Lady. What is her garb?
Page. I cannot well describe the fashion of it.
She is not deck'd in any gallant trim,
But seems to me, clad in the usual weeds
Of high, habitual state; for as she moves,
Wide flows her robe in many a waving fold,
As I have seen unfurled banners play
With the soft breeze.

It appears, that in her excessive anxiety about her brother, Jane had, on missing him, set off to Amberg to seek him. At the solicitation of Freberg and his lady she agrees to go to their party, on the special condition of being permitted to wear a mask, under the concealment of which she proposes to probe her brother's sentiments.

Methinks unknown, I e'en might speak to him,
And gently prove the temper of his mind.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

It has seldom fallen to our share to experience more unpleasant sensations, than those with which we now address our subscribers, on the subject of an article which appeared in the last number. We allude particularly to an offensive passage in the life of Mr. Quick. A plain relation of the fact will satisfy our readers that the thing was accidental, and induce them to acquit us of any purposed disrespect.

The quantity of original composition demanded for each number, and other cares attendant on the work, render it necessary for the editor to call in, at times, the help of an amanuensis, to whom it is given to transcribe the parts extracted from foreign publications. This was the case in the article under consideration, which the editor never perused farther than the first few lines, till his attention was called to it in the Mirror of Taste, by the observations of a friendly subscriber. On this view of the subject, the editor will no doubt stand acquitted; indeed, who could suspect him of intending such an outrage on the feelings of those whose approbation alone can support the work?

It may be said that the article ought not to have been put into the printer's hands, without previous examination. That is a point the editor will not dispute; yet surely he may be allowed to say that as, in most things done in life, men are obliged to rely frequently on the discretion of others, he could not be very culpable in trusting to a publication of much celebrity—one too which from its nature must be intended to find its way into the hands of the most polished portion of society in England: and he thinks it may be doubted whether there be one of those he now addresses, who would have felt the least apprehension in putting into the hands of his family the book from which the article alluded to is taken. Much as he laments the error his confidence has led him into, he cannot think that he need be ashamed of having extracted, without suspicion, an article from "Gilliland's Dramatic Mirror;" in the second volume of which work, printed so late as 1808, in London, the whole may be found, under the head "Quick," *verbatim et literatem*, as it stands in the Mirror of Taste.

The book is at Mr. Zantzinger's store, for the inspection of any subscriber who wishes to be assured of the truth.

Digitized by Google

THE

MIRROR OF TASTE

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

VOLUME III.] MARCH, 1811. [NUMBER III.

HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 73.]

IT has already been mentioned that the first French tragedy was composed by Lazare Baif. Nevertheless Jodelle was, like Æschylus, the father and founder of his country's tragedy. While only men of inferior circumstances and little influence dealt in dramatic poetry, the Confraternity were an overmatch for them, and frustrated all their efforts to introduce a rational and classical drama. In Jodelle, however, that society met a more powerful adversary. Being of an ennobled family, which had for ages been illustrious for talents as well as birth, his character stood high and his influence was powerful. From his boyish days he delighted in studying the Greek and Roman writers, and from them imbibed such a pure and correct taste for dramatic poetry that he became intolerant of the trash which went by that name in France; and was mortified to think that some superior genius had not yet arisen to rescue the stage of his country from its palpable state of barbarism, and to introduce plays fashioned in the manner of those of Sophocles, Euripides, Menander, Seneca, Plautus and Terence. Yielding to these impressions, he resolved to attempt a revolution himself;

Digitized by Google

and, foreseeing a powerful Counteraction to his purpose from the determination of the Confraternity to deceive the people and to hold the reins of public taste in their own hands, he exerted all his influence in procuring support, composed his "CLEOPATRA CAPTIVE," already mentioned, and in the court-yard of the hotel of Rheims, caused to be erected a theatre where his tragedy was performed. The king (Henry II.) was present. The concourse of spectators was immense, and the applause bestowed upon his play unbounded. Being then very young, and extremely handsome, he performed the character of Cleopatra himself. The extravagant praises of the people was not the whole that he acquired by this representation. For he made a complete proselyte of the king, not only by the tragedy, but by a prologue, which he wrote and spoke himself, in which he dexterously flattered the sovereign by insinuating that the muses had flown from Greece to France, in order to implore the protection of the greatest and brightest monarch in the world.

This piece was considered as by far the greatest tragedy that had yet been written in France; in short, a *nonpareille*, and a model for all succeeding dramatists. This being premised, a more correct idea of the taste and discrimination of that age cannot be conveyed by any means than by giving a short account of the performance itself. It opens with a ghost—the ghost of Mark Antony—making most lugubrious complaints that the gods, jealous of his exalted military fame and talents, had conspired with Cupid to enslave him with a passion which had cut short his life; and, not contented with that effort of malice, had inspired him with the horrid purpose, and compelled him to execute it too, of turning his wife and children out of doors, in order to render him odious to the Roman people. As matters cannot be worse, however, this amorous ghost resolves to persevere in his love, and to evince it by his conduct. He therefore reveals himself to Cleopatra while she is asleep; and urges her rather to put an end to her life at once than to become the captive of Octavius Cæsar, and be led in triumph chained to the chariot of that wily politician. He then orders her to meet him in the shades below within the next twenty-four hours.

The second act presents Cæsar felicitating himself upon the fortunate circumstance of having Cleopatra prisoner. The third act brings Cæsar to an interview with the haughty amorous

Digitized by Google

queen, who threatens to kick him, and frightens him away. She kills herself in the fourth act; and the fifth is occupied with lamentations for her death, and highflown eulogies upon her greatness. "Never yet has the light of heaven been shed upon so terrible a day for Egypt," says one of the characters. "I saw the queen in her royal habit and her crown on, stretched dead and pale, on a rich bed painted and finely gilt. Her woman Iras lay dead at her feet; Charmion yet breathed, but life was leaving her:—was this nobly done? said I. Yes, cried the faithful Charmion, it was nobly done; and every succeeding king of Egypt shall bear testimony to it. This said, she staggered, fell, and died."

Encouraged by the very flattering reception which his Cleopatra met with, Jodelle proceeded in his intended career; and in a short time afterwards produced a second tragedy, to which he gave the name of "The Sacrifice of Dido." There are few readers so ignorant as not to know that the fable was taken from the Æneid. In this play Jodelle had the good sense to adhere closely to the divine Mantuan. The success of this piece was scarcely less than that of its elder sister, and Jodelle at once stood confessed the Æschylus of France. Nor did he confine himself to tragedy; but had the ambition to become a votary of Thalia, and wrote a comedy called "Eugene, or the Rencontre." What share of success this had we have not been informed; but it was published along with his two tragedies, which made the whole of his finished dramatic works, together with some miscellaneous poems, in one volume. There were several other productions left behind him at his death in manuscript, all in an unfinished state, none of which found their way to the press. Jodelle was besides an orator of considerable excellence, and eminently versed in architecture and painting. He embraced protestantism, and composed a very satirical Latin poem ridiculing the popish mass; but, to save himself from the dangers which menaced the protestants in France, he returned again to the profession of popery, and by these means escaped the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's day. He however died very poor. Had his talents been equal to those of Shakspeare or Milton, they would not suffice to shield from contempt such wilful twofold apostasy. Yet De La Motte, who had the manuscripts above mentioned in his possession, says that Jodelle was extremely respected by all ranks of people, and admired by the learned of his day as a man of universal knowledge. It is indeed a sufficient proof of the supe-

Digitized by Google

riority of his talents, that of a large number of imitators who followed, one only produced any thing equal to the model from which he copied. This was his cotemporary GARNIER, who is said to have considerably eclipsed him; on which account, as Jodelle was considered the Æschylus of France, Garnier was styled its Sophocles.

As a poet, the praise is due to him of being the first who emulated Baif, and of having thereby supplanted the barbarous pieces of the Confraternity, and introduced the ancients in their place. His merit, in this respect, is augmented by the great difficulty he must have found in accommodating his native language to the expression of two so very opposite to it as the Greek and Roman—the harmonious, mellifluous and majestic verse of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the bold and dignified language of the Roman authors, to the flippant terseness of the French. His too is the praise of having fixed a standard for dramatic writing, and establishing a model by their imitation of which succeeding poets were enabled to raise the stage, render themselves illustrious, and exalt the drama of their country to the greatness it afterwards obtained under Corneille, Racine, Moliere and Voltaire.

The province of La Maine gave birth to Robert Garnier in 1534, two years after Jodelle was born. Originally intended for the profession of the law, the purpose of his parents was overruled by his passionate fondness for poetry and literature, to which he at an early age devoted his studies. The example and the fame of Jodelle, however, first animated him with the ambition to court the tragic muse. Jodelle was at the height of his reputation when Garnier was unknown as a poet. But the latter no sooner came forth to the public eye than he was considered superior to the former.

Charles the ninth, of flagitious memory, was then on the throne of France; and being desirous to attach to his interest all the men of genius he could find, endeavoured to bring Garnier to court; but the poet wisely preferring the leisure of domestic tranquillity he enjoyed in his comfortable retirement to the glare of a court, with its jealousies, heartburnings, anxieties and cabals; and thinking that (as Addison happily expresses it) "when impious men bear sway, the post of honour is a private station," evaded the royal solicitations, and remained at *Ferte Bernard*, in Maine, cultivating the favour of the muses and enriching his mind with

Digitized by Google

knowledge. How right he was in his choice, all who know the history of that reign can judge: for as Jodelle saved his life from the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day by returning to catholicism, Garnier saved his name from being mixed with the murderers by avoiding their company.

Upon the accession of Henry the Third to the throne of France, Garnier became again the object of regal notice, and was warmly solicited to leave his retirement. The agents of Henry in vain endeavoured to entice him to court by the most alluring offers of wealth and preferment; and Garnier had still the resolution to resist them. It was upon occasion of giving this refusal that he made an harangue which is commemorated as a masterpiece of eloquence, wisdom, patriotism and virtue.

Though the private history of this admirable man has, in strictness, nothing to do with the subject in hand, yet it is so extremely interesting that we feel ourselves impelled to finish it, persuaded that our readers will think it would have been unpardonable in us to omit it.

France fell soon after into a state of such distraction from the civil dissensions which ravaged the country, that it became the duty of every great and honest man to give his exertions to her service: Garnier, therefore, was at length prevailed upon, for the good of his country, to accept a place in the grand council of the realm; and, to that end, he established himself with his family at Paris. Ere he had been long there, a plague visited that city, which was almost entirely desolated by its ravages. While he was labouring under all the anxieties natural to a good husband and father for the fate of his wife and children, he had the additional mortification to discover an infernal conspiracy among his servants; which had for its object the destruction of him and his family. It appeared that they had devised a plot to cut off the whole by poison, and to ascribe their deaths to the plague. The horrible purpose of these monsters was first detected by the death of Madame Garnier, to whom the poison was first administered, and who no sooner touched it than she felt its pernicious effects; but though every possible expedient was resorted to by physicians to save her, she fell a victim to its deadly virulence. The tender, faithful Garnier followed her in a few months after, dying of grief for the loss of the best of wives, in his forty-sixth year, and leaving his children fatherless and motherless to the care of the world.

Digitized by Google

The works of Garnier consist of tragedies, songs and elegies, composed in a style and manner very obsolete. Of his tragedies, which were eight in number, the subjects are chosen for the times in which he wrote, and calculated principally to display the evils of civil war: fulfilling in this, as he appears to have done in all his actions, the duties of the man and the patriot as well as of the poet. To improve the morals and enlighten the minds of his countrymen seems to have been his first object; poetical fame his next. Whatever the faults of his composition may be, they belonged to the time in which he lived; and their merits were far greater than those of any preceding or cotemporary productions. Let his biographer, however, be heard: "No pieces," says he, "were at that time equal to those of Garnier. His subjects are noble, his personages are great characters, his style is harmonious, and sometimes energetic. The critics, however, have reproached him with preferring the manner of Seneca, to that of Sophocles and Euripides; and with giving to dialogue, which should be as near to nature as possible, sometimes epistolary familiarity, sometimes the epic pomp of the epopeia, sometimes the flights of the Pindaric ode, and sometimes the pastoral imagery of eclogue. In a word, to have created new expressions charged with Grecisms and Latinisms. But in spite of all his faults, Garnier will always hold a considerable rank as a dramatic poet. His is the merit of being the first of the French dramatic poets who blended the patriot with the poet. He took, as Jodelle had done, his subjects from the ancients; but, superior to Jodelle in his application of them, he brought them home immediately to the business and bosoms of his own countrymen. By a lively representation of the enormities committed, and the miseries endured, by the Romans in their civil commotions, he filled the French people with horror and disgust at their intestine dissensions; and, so powerfully attacked and exposed to view the pride, the jealousy, and the malignant passions of the former, that the latter seeing themselves as in a mirror, recoiled with horror at their own deformity, and were filled with detestation of their own crimes and errors.

For so bold and virtuous a project Garnier would be intitled to a high rank of praise; but being successful too in such a reformation, he deserves immortal glory. He aimed too at an equal improvement of the French taste and style; but in this he was

Digitized by Google

not, nor indeed could be successful. The French language was not then sufficiently defecated; and the very plan he adopted of imitating the ancients gave a sameness to his pieces, and precluded that variation of manner essential to excellence in taste and composition. For this France was first indebted to Corneille and Racine; but Corneille and Racine were, on their parts, indebted to Jodelle and Garnier, who may be considered as the pioneers who cleared the way and marked out the ground on which the others acquired immortality.

As the French tragedy first rose from translations of the ancients, it continued for a long time to be tinctured with their manner even in the compositions which could boast of most originality; but the greater number of pieces which for many years after the death of Jodelle and Garnier appeared on the French stage, were either translations from the Greek and Latin dramatists, or else imitations of them, varied here and there at times by the introduction of new matter, but varied for the worse, being tainted with the absurdity and bad taste of the preceding era. Here, therefore, the history of the French drama may be said to be a blank for about half a century, when the celebrated HARDY arose: that HARDY, who, if half or even a quarter of what is related of him be true, stands (next to Lope de Vega) above all poets for fecundity of invention, and multiplicity and variety of dramatic productions; who, without any excitement from emulation of rivalship, or the jealousy of competition, for he had neither rival nor competitor; and without any stimulus from avarice, for he lived and died poor, but merely to support life, and feed his laudable ambition with the applause of his country, for thirty years kept his invention on the stretch, and with industry and patience, of which we cannot find an example among men, strained and lavished his genius, though he could neither impair nor exhaust it, in supplying the French theatre with plays, and himself with a scanty subsistence.

Little is known respecting the parentage of this extraordinary man. His birth remains involved in obscurity; but as the first accounts of him place him in the situation of a retainer to a company of strolling players, whom he, in a way that even then astonished the world, supplied with a constant succession of new pieces, historians think it most probable that he was the son of an actor and actress. His birth, however, is a matter of very little moment

Digitized by Google

to the world, or to himself: his fame rests upon a much more exalted and substantial foundation.

Hardy's reputation, while among the strollers, soon reached the theatre of Paris, where the players had just formed a plan of performing three times a week; but were unable to carry it into execution for want of poets to supply them with a succession of new pieces. In Hardy, if they could procure his assistance, they imagined they would have a mine of invention sufficiently productive for their purposes, and they accordingly made him overtures which he readily accepted. This laborious task he performed with unabated industry and correspondent success to the day of his death, supplying the company all that time with nearly the whole of the pieces they performed.

When admiration is once excited, credulity rarely fails to step in and back it; and those who see the works of an individual greatly exceeding the ordinary powers of men, entirely resign their judgment to the dominion of wonder, and forget that there are boundaries beyond which it is physically impossible for human exertion to move. Thus it is related of Hardy, that he wrote eight hundred dramatic pieces, and could compose with such quickness and facility that he often produced two thousand lines in twenty-four hours. This last is an evident, a monstrous exaggeration; since the nimblest amanuensis could not transcribe so much in the course of that time. Scudery laments that Hardy performed the wonders related of him under severe disadvantages; that he was persecuted by the invidious, and his genius shackled by extreme poverty; and that if it had not been for the difficulties attendant upon distress, his productions would have been inimitable. On the contrary, *Perfaict* says, that Scudery instead of "inimitable" should have written "passable." But Fontenelle, on whom greater reliance may be placed than on both the others, speaking of Hardy, says "his fecundity certainly is marvellous; but then neither his verses nor the disposition of his pieces have cost him much pains. Nothing comes amiss to him. Every subject is good. Whether it be the death of Achilles, or a tradesman's wife that the husband catches in adultery, it is all the same to Hardy. Every thing is equally tragedy; nor have manners and decorum any thing to do in the business." "It must be confessed, however," says Fontenelle, after finding some other faults, "that the pieces of Hardy have not

Digitized by Google

that tiresome insupportable tameness that pervades the greater part of those which have gone before them; for the subjects sometimes give them greater strength and interest, though the poetry is not written with proportionable force."

It appears probable that Hardy had powers to write much better than he did: but who is he that can do very well that which he does in a hurry? The ladies of Helicon, not less than those of Philadelphia or New York, are coy to the suit of the poor; and *sine Cerere et Baccho friget*, is as true of the muses as of Venus. Hardy was miserably distressed in his circumstances. Poverty compelled him to write by contract. Quantity, not quality, therefore was his object; and, though it would have redounded more to his posthumous fame to have written less and better, he no doubt consulted his temporary convenience more effectually by writing as he did.

After all, it would be difficult, if possible, to find a poet (Lope de Vega excepted) who, judging his works in a compound ratio of their bulk and quality, has given proofs of such prodigious fertility of invention. No one was more prompt to point out his faults than he himself was to confess them, and to account for them by a reference to his embarrassed situation. Too discerning not to perceive the defects in his composition; too candid not to own them, and too proud and honest not to justify himself by a disclosure of the truth, he threw the blame on his inevitable situation, and said that he was obliged to write so much that he had not time either to arrange or to correct.

It is indeed a grievous reflection that, in the history of poetry and the drama, so many instances should occur of superlative genius impaired and half lost to the world by the depression of poverty, and the prudential dispositions of time and labour inforced by narrow circumstances. Though Shakspeare was not absolutely poor, he was a man of that kind of prudence which dictates that, in the application of talents to the business of life, the first object of consideration should be the securing of an independent provision for old age. A strict review of his works and his life, with the copious commentaries annexed to them, will show that he thought much less of seeking the immortality he ultimately obtained than supplying the wants of the day passing over him, and a something for the repose of his age. For of the glaring

Digitized by Google

faults in his productions there is little doubt that the far greater number may be ascribed to his determination to conform to the taste of the time he lived in, which taste he very frequently satirizes with great force and acuteness. We need not go farther than that affectation of quaintness and quibbling which so generally pervades his plays, which was then the prevalent fashion of the times, even at court, and which he so successfully ridicules in his character of Polonius.

The genius of Otway was no doubt superior to the conception of the vile trash introduced in his Venice Preserved by Antonio and Aquilina, if he had not deemed something of the kind indispensably necessary to the success of the piece. And Massinger, whose piety was as exalted, and morals were as pure as his mind was luminous and strong, would never have stained his glorious compositions with the abominable obscenity which disgraced them in their original form, if he had not been compelled by sharp poverty to procure his daily support by writing to please a vitiated age.

Dryden too, whom Churchill styles "The great high priest of all the Nine," was reduced to the bitter necessity of drudging for the stage, and pleasing the multitude at the expense of decency and virtue. There is this difference, however, between his filth and Massinger's, that his seems to be spontaneous, full of life, spirit and wit, and in short done *con amore;* whereas that of Massinger is laboured, dull, stupid, and so destitute not only of wit but even of common drollery, that he must have written it entirely against the grain.

To return to Hardy. He himself printed an edition of his works, which contained only forty-one pieces; but in his preface to that edition he speaks of his having written before that time more than six hundred. Of so vast a number the far greater part must have been short things, composed on the spur of the moment, for some temporary or local purpose, like our short interludes. That they were of little value is evident from his declining to publish them with his other works, which he no doubt would have done if he had thought them worth selection. It is, however, a fact, which could not be believed, if it were not established by incontrovertible evidence, that he continued, with daily increasing success, to supply the theatre of Paris with a constant series of novelty for about thirty years: a task which afterwards employed twenty of the most

Digitized by Google

distinguished poets of France, with the great CORNEILLE at the head of them.

To Hardy, France stands for ever indebted for clearing the way to that high and just estimation which her drama soon after held. He may be said to have given new life and strength to the French stage, by inspiring the people with so passionate a fondness for dramatic entertainments, and such an avidity for frequenting the theatre, that the performances, which, when he began to write for it, never took place more than three times a week, long before he died took place every day, Sunday itself not excepted. Hardy now became sole dramatist of Paris. The spectators became so much too numerous for one theatre, that the company built a second and divided itself into two sets, one of which continued to play at their old play-house Le Hotel de Burgogne, while the other performed at the new one *au Marais*. By an order of the police, the theatre was obliged to open each day at one o'clock and close at four. The fashionable dinner hour at that time was twelve o'clock. There were no lamps in the streets, few coaches had been made even for the highest class, and the great city of Paris was deluged with filth and swarmed with robbers.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

BIOGRAPHY.

[The engraving which embellishes this number is a striking likeness of Mrs. Wood. We hear with great pleasure that the portrait of Mr. Warren, in our last number, is acknowledged by every one who has seen it, and who knows the original, to be the best likeness that has yet been done in copper-plate in America. It may be doubted whether any thing of the same kind done in Europe exceeds it. It is therefore but a just tribute to the artists who executed it, to make particular mention of their names in this place. Sully painted—Edwin engraved it. In England it will be considered as a rare specimen of the advancement of the arts in this country. The portrait of Mrs. Wood comes from the pencil of Peale and the graver of Edwin; and will no doubt be acceptable to our subscribers, not only as a handsome specimen of American arts, but as a striking resemblance of a lady whose public talents and private virtues have raised her to a very high rank in public estimation.]

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WARREN,

Actor and Manager of the Philadelphia Theatre.

[Continued from page 86.]

Aware that Biggs would use every persuasion, or, failing in them, have recourse to the very worst means to detain him, Warren determined, as we have already mentioned, to go off privately. Cases had occurred of that tyrant's proceeding by the most wicked practices, even perjury itself, to intimidate his discontented actors into compliance. Our hero, therefore, set out on foot one night after the play was over on his road to Taunton.

'Twas now the dead of night, and half the world
Was in a lonely, solemn darkness hung.

In every cottage house the lights were out; the only noise that reached his ears was the barking of the village dog; he pushed on hastily, and passing the town of Yeaville without stopping, found himself, by break of day, about twenty miles from Sherborne. Feeling himself much more hungry than fatigued, he resolved to stop and get his breakfast at the first public house he should find open, and pushing on a little further found what he so sharply longed for; a thick smoke curling up from the chimney of an inn

Digitized by Google

appeared at no great distance before him. From this attraction he acquired additional celerity, and so effectually bestirred himself that in less than an hour he had completely satisfied the clamors of his appetite. To his inexpressible satisfaction too, he found that there was a stage coach preparing to go to Taunton. So, thinking that after such a long and hasty walk, he might indulge himself with a ride, he got in and was conveyed to the end of his journey.

The Taunton company, which was under the management of Tag Davis, was a very good one, being composed of DOWTON, who now stands so deservedly high in estimation on the London boards; RYLEY, who wrote the Itinerant; BIGNELL, who since was partner with West and died at Charleston; BAYNES; JONATHAN DAVIS, the singer; and that curious character old JACK MONTAGUE. As it was near the close of the season when Warren arrived, and the company was quite full, he was fain to take such business as was offered him, and, in common with the other actors, played on shares; to very little purpose however, for he scarcely got any thing. But this was not to be ascribed to Davis, who dealt fairly with his actors, and was at this time himself almost as much distressed as any of them. At the end of three weeks from our hero's arrival in Taunton, however, the season closed, and Davis having arranged his plans to spend the summer months at Lyme, a small seaport town and watering place in Dorsetshire, where he purposed opening in two or three weeks from his leaving Taunton, Warren found it expedient to put about ship and run into his old secure port, his father's house, to victual and refit. Had he been able to pay for a place in the stage, he would have been ashamed to go into one, his wardrobe was become so exceedingly shabby; wherefore, taking a short stick in his hand, he set out on foot and once more arrived at Bath: this being the termination of his second sally.

Before his departure from Taunton he made Davis a promise to rejoin the company in a short time: accordingly, having by means of ease, comfortable living, and the endearments of a most excellent mother, got again into heart and condition, and his wardrobe being replenished with a new assortment of clothes of every kind by his father, he resolved to set out on his third sally and to join Davis's company at Chard, a town twelve miles beyond Taunton, where in order to dispose of the interval between his leaving Taunton and opening at Lyme, Davis had fitted up a room as

Digitized by Google

a theatre, and was performing. On his arrival, Warren found the prospect very far from flattering. He however resolved to take his share in the fate of the company, and continued with them; but nothing was to be got there; so, according to their usual custom of moving in hopes of bettering themselves, the company left Chard, and proceeded bag and baggage to Lyme. Here they could scarcely obtain a bare subsistence, though the celebrated David Ross, the actor, was then master of the ceremonies of the place, and exerted all his power and influence to promote their success.

There was in the character and conduct of Davis, the manager, something so irresistibly conciliating, that the performers would endure distresses of the most sharp and aggravating kind as long as it was possible for human nature to subsist under them, rather than entirely desert him. By this time our readers will have formed some conception, though it be a slight one, of the habits of strolling players in England. Young healthy bachelors of vigorous constitution and lively animal spirits, who have no wants but their own to supply, no concerns or feelings but their own to think of, after some hard struggles with their wayward fate, not only become reconciled to their distresses, but turning their calamities to cheerfulness make their very miseries a source of merriment, and endeavour to alleviate by laughter the evils they cannot remedy. Thus they spin out years of existence in a checkered series of good and evil; an alternation, unknown in any other department of life, of pain and pleasure; of grinding want and careless merriment; of hunger and fatigue, and joke and revelry. Animated by the example of those about him, the young itinerant soon learns to draw upon his spirits for the deficiencies of his purse, and this at length obtains so fully the force of habit in him as rarely to be affected by change of place or circumstances, and ultimately imparts to the whole corps, with very few exceptions, one general outline of character, compounded of thoughtless gaiety, extravagance, festive sociability, and fondness for luxuriating in humor.

> Humor, with arched brow and leering eye,
> Shrewd, solemn, sneering, subtle, slow and sly,
> Serious herself, yet laughter still provoking
> By tickling, teasing, jibing, jeering, joking;
> Impartial gift, that owns nor rank nor birth,
> 'Tis theirs who rule the realm, or till the earth.

No man exceeded poor Davis in the kind of philosophy here

Digitized by Google

alluded to. He laughed incessantly, and made a joke of every thing. Was there a full house, it was a good joke and he laughed; was there an empty house, he laughed too, and was merry at the prospect of the next. His mind, like that of Zanga, though on a more laudable principle, could

> Turn all occurrence to its own advantage,
> And e'en make comfort of calamity.

And one would think too that, like Zanga, he was proud of it; for if, by any auspicious accident, a little money came into his hands, rather than not have the calamity of an empty pocket to jest upon, he would lend his cash to persons, to whom to lend was the same thing as to give away; and thus he had treasured up a fund of anecdote respecting his past misadventures, his arrests, imprisonments, poverty and sufferings, which he would relate in convivial hours with inexpressible glee, while those who heard him were astonished how human nature could support itself under the pressure of such weighty calamities. In a word, as Warren says, his laughter seemed to bear exact proportion to his poverty. Honest, benevolent, warm in his friendships, incapable of long enmity, and full of sensibility to the distresses of others, he was careless about himself, and so very absent that he would frequently be drawn away, and suffer himself to be occupied by the most trivial incident or employment, while the most important concerns and unavoidable duties were entirely forgotten. Just at the moment when his presence was necessary upon the stage, the company would have to send messengers in different directions to search for him, on which occasions he would often be found either asleep or intently engaged in some puerile amusement. One day, while he and the company were at Chard, he was missed at a time when business of the utmost importance demanded his presence; the funny rogues of his company called in the aid of the bellman, who, having at his usual places of outcry rung his bell and collected a mob about him, proclaimed poor Davis in the following words, which were written down on paper for the purpose by the company.

"Lost—supposed to be left asleep at some public house, Mr. John Davis, commonly called Tag Davis, manager of the theatre in this town. This is to give notice, that whoever will bring the said John Davis and deliver him into the hands of his friends at the Angel inn, shall receive four pence reward, and no questions

Digitized by Google

asked." Good humored as Davis was, he did not relish this treatment by any means. But, though it hurt his feelings, it made no alteration in his conduct.

Of our company's adventures at Lyme, Ryley has in his "Itinerant" given a description so circumstantial, lively and interesting, and tallying so exactly with that of Warren in conversation, that we think it would be paying a compliment to ourselves at the expense of our readers, to take it out of the language of that ingenious and humorous writer.

"The inauspicious fortnight at Chard expired," says Ryley, "and manager Davis was overwhelmed with debt. I had already lent him, at different times, twenty pounds of my small capital, and ten pounds more must be forthcoming ere the landlord would suffer the scenery, &c. to leave his premises; my purse was reduced to five pounds ten shillings, and his sole dependence rested upon me. But five pounds ten shillings could not, by any rule of arithmetic, pay ten pounds, and the landlord was governed by no other principle. If the scenery and wardrobe were incarcerated, a body of people must give over eating, and that was a prejudice of education of which no argument or system of philosophy could cure them.

"If I had left this unfortunate concern when we closed at Taunton, I had saved both my purse and reputation; but a something like gratitude attached me to this thoughtless mismanaging manager, and ere I was aware we were ingulfed in the vortex of poverty and disgrace. To make short of the ungrateful theme, I disbursed my five pounds, and left two trunks containing the greatest part of my wardrobe, as security for the remainder, the manager solemnly promising to redeem them the first week we opened the theatre at Lyme. This promise, however, was not fulfilled till several months afterwards, to our great loss, inconvenience and misery.

"We had twelve miles to travel, and my ten shillings comprised the whole stock of the company. Miss Stanley, and my wife, Warren, Dowton, Jonathan Davis, and myself made a party to walk. We set off early in the afternoon, (meaning to take refreshment at Axminster, seven miles on our road) followed by little Fan, and alternately carrying a cage containing four tame goldfinches. The day was remarkably fine, the party in high health and spirits; young, ardent, and thoughtless, we reflected not on the future,

Digitized by Google

but grasped pleasure with an eager hand while she was yet within our reach.

"Arrived at Axminster, we entered the principal inn, where I ordered tea and coffee, and, to wash down the dust by which we were nearly choked, added a bottle of cider; the feathered prisoners were restored to liberty, water was placed in the middle of the room, and after they had laved their limbs, their little throats swelled in carols of thanksgiving.

"The joke passed round, good humor was the order of the day, and Jonathan Davis swore we were the most happy undone beings in the world. In the midst of our laugh the door was by accident left open, and one of my birds flew out; I followed, and found him perched on the pipe of a decent looking man in the bar. 'Sir,' said he, 'I am as fond of pets as you are, and never without one about me;' saying which he opened his shirt bosom, and showed me the head of a snake. Much surprised, and I confess a little alarmed, I retreated. 'Don't fear,' said he, 'the creature is perfectly harmless;' placing it on the floor, it hissed round the room, and as he held out his hand, coiled itself upon it; then opening his bosom, it sprung in, apparently as to a place of choice.

"I suppose my looks spoke surprise, for he continued, 'you would scarcely perhaps have believed this without ocular demonstration. We are the children of prejudice, and brought up with an idea, that reptiles of this description are poisonous. You may rest assured of the contrary; I speak from experience, from the most accurate investigation; and I do not confine myself to this species of animal, but firmly believe that England is exempt from venomous creatures as much as Ireland, which is generally allowed to be so.'

"I did not at the time give full credit to this assertion; but, from after experience, am led to believe he was right. From conversation I have held with farmers and other people, whose whole lives have passed in the country, I could never find a single instance in their own immediate knowledge where injury was sustained from the bite or sting of these animals, more than would have followed the bite of a cat, or the sting of a wasp, and any thing to the contrary I believe to be mere hearsay and prejudice.

"The bill discharged, I had a surplus of three shillings, with which we began our last stage; but poor Fan, from age and bulk, was incapable of walking, in consequence of which we carried her in turn, and pursued our way with renovated spirits.

Digitized by Google

"In the close of the evening we entered the principal inn at Lyme. The dust and heat had not improved our original appearance; on the contrary, from the side glances of the waiter, when we ordered supper and beds, I suppose we looked rather queer; however he made a supercilious kind of bow, and said, he would send his master.

"Not conscious that any suspicion could attach to eight dusty pedestrians, we waited the master's arrival without apprehension, though a good deal mortified at the looks of the waiter.

"The landlord attended our summons, and, in a very civil key, begged to know what we would like for supper, at the same time saying, 'his house was so full, he could only accommodate us with one bed;' this we appropriated to Ann and Miss Stanley, and made shift ourselves with sophas and chairs.

"After breakfast I informed the landlord of our business in Lyme, and requested him to recommend some lodgings; this he did, and sent a boy with us to several; but alas! they were upon a scale of expense too enlarged for our finances. Dismissing the boy, we sauntered about the place, and in a little back street saw, in characters almost unintelligible, the following words, pasted on a window, '*this ous to lette reddy furniched.*'

"The very thing we want,' said Dowton, 'a house ready furnished; here we shall find an establishment at once.'

"The idea of a house! a furnished house! in our circumstances, was more than my power of face could hear with gravity. 'A house!' said I, 'a cottage! a hovel! the first floor of a barn! that would be more suitable to the narrow scale of our circumstances!'

"An old woman, who was watching our movements from the house opposite, now came forward. Dowton inquired the rent, and what number of beds? To our surprise and joy, she answered, there were three beds, and the rent was twelve shillings per week. What began in joke, now appeared a matter of the first importance.

"Three beds would, upon a pinch, accommodate us, and twelve shillings per week, divided by five, would be more moderate than any thing we could possibly expect. We entered the premises, and closed the bargain instantly. To increase our satisfaction, there was a small quantity of coals, for which we were to pay four shillings at the end of the first week. A fire was lighted, and we commenced housekeeping with my three shillings. The inmates

Digitized by Google

were Mrs. R. and myself, Miss Stanley, and Messrs. Warren and Dowton; Jonathan Davis procured a room in the neighbourhood. It was two hours past meridian, and hunger became oppressive. The exercise of the morning, joined to the sea breeze and change of air, were at woful enmity with my purse; its contents were swallowed up in providing a single meal, and that of the plainest kind; however we ate our bread and cheese in thankfulness, and washed it down with a draught of excellent porter.

"Leaving my companions, I strolled about in search of a pawnbroker; but so useful a personage was unknown in Lyme. The *three balls* were never even heard of. Wandering through some of the poor narrow streets, I espied the cart containing the stage property, on the top were seated Mesdames Bridges and Hall, who, from a too frequent application to their favourite stomachic, seemed in evident danger of quitting their elevation. Not very anxious to be claimed as an acquaintance, I made a precipitate retreat, and took my course towards the sea, in a fit of melancholy despondency, meditating upon the past, and looking forward with little hope of the future. In all my distress, I had never hitherto wanted the common necessaries of life; but now that idea was attended with a degree of horror so painful, that I sat on the beach listening to the rolling surge, and comparing my once affluent and respectable state, to my present pennyless, friendless, and degraded one. The beach was at this moment deserted, for the inhabitants were poor, and had few leisure intervals; the local visiters were in the height of gaiety and happiness seated round the dinner table; and I, who used to be first of the cheerful throng, was now—not without a house, but—'without the means to support that house;' without the means of providing even another meal; and the theatre would not be ready to open for several days.

"Walking with my arms folded, and my eyes fixed upon the sand, I inadvertently ran against somebody, and looking up, discovered a servant in livery, whom I recognised as a domestic of Sir —— ——, from the neighbourhood of Worcester, with whom I had been in habits of intimacy, some months before, as far as theatrical chit-chat in the box lobby and other occasional attentions. Humbled and ashamed, I was going to avoid him; but taking off his hat, he inquired, in a soft tone of voice, after my health, and added his master, who was just arrived, would, he was sure, be glad to see me.

Digitized by Google

"Thomas,' said I, 'times are strangely altered with me since I had the honour of your master's notice.'

"What, sir—money is not so plentiful; these small towns are not so good as Worcester for plays.'

"I then informed him, that so far from money being plentiful, I was literally without a shilling, and would be obliged if he could lend me one. The poor fellow shook his head, put his hand into his pocket, and, with the tear of sensibility in his eye, produced three pence halfpenny, as the whole of his worldly stock. This I would have refused, as perhaps inconvenient for him to part with, and would be of no essential service to me; but he pressed it upon me, and requested me in tones of sympathy to keep up my spirits, times would mend; then inquiring my residence with a respectful bow, left me.

"My sea side reflections and adventure I kept to myself; Ann was, like the rest, a foe to melancholy, and as I had nothing, either pleasant or profitable, to impart, the communication would answer no desirable purpose.

"Six o'clock, our usual tea hour, arrived; but, for the first time since I can remember, it passed by us unnoticed. The cheerful rattle of the cups and saucers, the social bubble of the tea kettle, the enlivening conversation that pleasant beverage never fails to produce, this day greeted not our ears.

"The hours passed heavily with me till nine o'clock; though my companions had their occasional repartees, but no scheme occurred for 'raising the wind,' as Jonathan Davis called it, and a gnawing pain at the stomach gave notice, that the supper hour could not be passed over with that philosophy which marked the hour of six. 'I have not tasted food for three long days,' said Dowton, in a tragedy accent.

'Let us have no lying; it becomes none but tradesmen,' replied Jonathan Davis.

'Is it for this I left my father's shop?' rejoined Warren, 'Oh, that he were here to write me down an ass!'

'To go, or not to go? that is the question! Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the pressing calls of hunger, or by an effort end them?' This was said by Miss Stanley, but no one gave a reply. After a few minutes' silence, she suddenly rose, put on her bonnet and cloak, which were of the most fashionable kind, and sallied forth. We looked at each other. Dowton, whose partiality

Digitized by Google

was apparent, became restless and wondered where she was gone. Ann wished one of the party had attended her; it was late, and a young woman, in a strange place, was subject to insult. I felt uneasy; she had talked of an effort to end our present wants. What effort a beautiful young creature could make, I trembled to think of. Every one gave his opinion, which ended in a determination to go in search of her. We were preparing to put our resolution in practice, when in walked the object of our inquietude. To our questions she gave no direct answer, but taking off her bonnet, sat down as before. We were relapsing into melancholy, when a thundering knock at the door awakened our attention. What could it be? Jonathan Davis answered the appeal, and in rushed two waiters—one laden with a tray containing a variety of eatables, the other carrying six bottles of porter, and two of wine: the crazy oak dining table was drawn from the wall; the cloth was laid; the dainties spread. The waiters bowed, 'any further commands to-night, ma'm?' 'No; tell your master I shall call upon him.' All this was the work of a moment; we gazed with amazement; no one uttered a word; and even after the waiters had retired, we could scarcely persuade ourselves that such things were. The comfort of a good supper we were not prepared to expect, and, as a stranger, we made it welcome.

"I dare say, there never were six people more truly happy; we enjoyed the present moment without anticipating the future. 'Take no thought for to-morrow, for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' seems to be a maxim which predominantly governs the sons and daughters of Thespis. We were more anxious to hear by what means our caterer had provided the present entertainment than troubled for the future.

"After this truly comfortable meal was over, she said 'As one of the weaker vessels, I found my fortitude sinking under the painful necessity of going to bed supperless, especially as our meals, this day, have not been of a nature to overload the digestive faculties. A good supper is to me at all times a luxury; but this evening it was absolutely a necessary. With this impression strong upon my mind, I went to a strange hotel, marked in our morning's progress, and desired the waiter to send a handsome cold supper, for half a dozen, to my lodgings, with the necessary appendages of porter and wine. You see how it answered; there is plenty left for dinner to-morrow, and for breakfast we must shift as well as we can.'

Digitized by Google

"Jonathan Davis promised to exercise his wits to procure the morning's repast, and we separated in perfect amity amongst ourselves, and in charity with all mankind.

"We had scarcely assembled in the morning when Jonathan Davis rushed into the house, crying out, 'Tea and muffins for six directly! towards which here are two *hog*, my masters, and all acquired by my knowledge in surgery. I bow with reverence to the first inventors of toothdrawing; for by extracting *one*, I shall be the means of giving employment to *many*—so to breakfast, my boys, with what appetites you may!"

What a picture! So many persons endowed with genius, liberal spirits, and with information and taste far above the level of the society they lived in, reduced to such a precarious state of existence. But let us leave Ryley's narrative, and resume our own.

Sir John de la Pole happening to come to Lyme, visited the theatre; and, after seeing some of the performances, recommended it to Davis to pay a visit to Colliton, where he lived, and made an offer to the company of a large barn on his estate to perform in. Colliton lay close to Beer and Seaton, both of which being eminent places for contraband trade, were at all times full, not only with smugglers and seamen, but with revenue officers and dragoons stationed there to aid them in executing their duty; circumstances which sir John observed would in all probability insure, for some time at least, full audiences to the performances of the company. Davis and his people gladly accepted the proposal, and carrying with them so much of the scenery and wardrobe as sufficed to make up a hasty stage for a few performances, took possession of sir John's barn, and commenced a regular series of exhibitions of twice a week. This answered much better than Lyme: the company did pretty well for a time:—that is to say, they were able to live and to pay charges as they went along. They had however the advantage, and it was a very considerable one, of paying no rent for their theatre. Had Biggs been manager, instead of poor Davis, it would have fared differently with the actors; for it was his custom to charge the company a very heavy rent for the very public rooms, with the use of which he was accommodated by the gratuitous benevolence of the magistrates and other gentry. Even at that early stage of his life, Warren was actuated by a spirit of independence, which dictated strict frugality and forbade every kind of unnecessary indulgence attended with expense, and which made him regardless

Digitized by Google

of any kind of labour or fatigue that enabled him to nurse his little pittance. Thus the whole time that he was playing at Colliton, he returned every night, after the play and farce were over, back to his bed at Lyme [*eight miles*] in order to save himself the expense of a second lodging.

For a short time things went on comfortably enough at Colliton. The receipts of the company were tolerably good and their expenditures very small: but unfortunately the liberal and worthy patron, to whose efforts, influence and generosity, they owed more of their success than they were before aware of, was called away from Colliton by some business of high importance, and all their comforts disappeared along with him; for the theatre was little attended in his absence, and they no longer got a sufficiency for support. In the mean time their performances at Lyme were neglected by the people; the theatre there was almost wholly deserted; and, to finish the climax of their distresses and difficulties, the hardhearted owner of the malt house, in which they performed, seized the property for his rent.

It happened that Biggs was at this time with a small company performing at Bedminster, eighteen miles from Lyme. Hearing of Warren's being in Davis's company, he paid him a visit, and solicited him to return. As the benefits were yet to come on, and not only poor manager Davis, but every actor and actress in the company would materially suffer by the slightest diminution of their number, which was already too small, Warren would not leave them entirely, but arranged matters so as to play three times a week in each place. His fatigue now became extremely great; for as he walked to Bedminster and back again every time he played there, he had, besides acting in play and farce, and studying the parts assigned him, one hundred and eight miles to walk each week.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

MISCELLANY.

For the Mirror of Taste.

Mr. Editor,

You must know that your present correspondent was, before old age had silvered his head, one of those nothing-to-do sort of gentlemen that swarm in every metropolis. Nature did her part towards making me a perfect *non chalant:* but my happy genius was not left to uncertain Nature to be guided; Art improved on the negative bounties of her predecessor. Before I arrived at the age of manhood I was as exquisite a specimen of genuine apathy as ever was seen in the streets of this crowded metropolis. I seem to have been stoicism imbodied, and had it not been for a casual contusion or some sad mishap, by which my corporeal system sustained an injury, I should have really doubted whether I possessed any sensibility whatever. Frequenting places of public amusement was eminently serviceable for the exercise of my toothpick, or the display of a snuff box abounding in curious devices, the legacy of my grandfather. The fashion of the day was favourable to my apathy: such nonchalance as I inherited from nature was thought to be evidence of a mind above the ordinary concerns of existence. While this caprice of fashion maintained its ground, I was regarded as the standard of fashionable parties. Unfortunately, the counter caprice of fashion was now the rage of the day, and all her votaries seemed to have been inoculated for sympathy at once. The theatre then regained its ascendency in the empire of amusements, and many sick ladies of my acquaintance were moved to smiles or tears by passages that but a fortnight before they heard with an indifference equal to mine. This new arrangement it was necessary for me to observe, or to undergo the penalty of exclusion from all our fashionable circles. Resolving not to trust my own judgment in so delicate an affair, I was compelled to follow the most approved standards of sympathy now extant, the eyes of female beauty. As soon as these admonitory symbols appeared, my white handkerchief was compelled to do duty. I then reclined my head upon my hand, and waited with much patience and resignation for the hour of sympathy to expire. Often have I removed my benevolent veil and squinted obliquely to see if the shower was

Digitized by Google

over, until the falling drops reminded me of my duty. Obedient to the summons, I complied with the strictest fidelity, until the ascension of ruddy cheeks and sparkling eyes restored my handkerchief to my pocket. This expedient answered my most sanguine expectations, until an unfortunate circumstance detected and exposed the imposture. A lady, who sat beside me in the box, had some occasion for her handkerchief other than that of sympathy. I was so unfortunate as to misunderstand the nature of the signal. Conjecturing that the hour of sympathy had now arrived, I followed her example; and, not satisfied with silent grief, I began to sigh and to sob so loud as to attract the notice of the company. They anxiously inquired into the cause of my affliction, and I was compelled to leave the box by affecting a sudden indisposition. At another time I had entirely forgot the place I was in, and the part it became me to act. A lady, for whom I felt all that penchant that a man of my habits is capable of feeling, was deeply affected with the sufferings of Desdemona. She raised her fine dripping orbs from her handkerchief, and discovered me, O shame to gallantry! quietly employed in eating her nuts. Never did Othello himself have more serious cause of complaint against the handkerchief than I had. There was but one way to remedy this evil, to pretend that tragedy was no favourite amusement of mine.

My next resort was to comedy, a species of entertainment that rendered the presence of the fatal handkerchief no longer necessary. Accordingly I purchased a stout hickory cane for the purpose of belabouring applause upon the benches. Here I thought it morally impossible that any untoward accident could happen, and solaced myself with the hope of redeeming the character I had lost. I accordingly waited for signals not so equivocal as handkerchiefs, and gained very considerable credit among my associates for dramatic taste and judgment, for which I was altogether indebted to the muscular vigor of my arm. Here again that partial deity Fortune abandoned me; for, in a luckless moment, my eyes were directed one way and my blows another, when my stout sapling fell, with uncommon energy, full upon the head of a gentleman sitting underneath. The consequence was that an action for assault and battery was brought, and for which I was made responsible in damages.

It may be well conceived, sir, that after this discomfiture I abandoned the exercise of the hickory. One more expedient

Digitized by Google

remained, and it was my forlorn hope; and that was to give pedestrian evidence of my dramatic taste and judgment. As my head and hands had hitherto failed me, I was resolved to try what virtue there was in my heels. While I was thus employed in beating time with my feet to the smiles of the fair, my foot alighted full upon an angry corn on the toe of a gentleman who sat beside me in the box. He suddenly bounced up in a violent passion, displayed a formidable sledge in the shape of a fist, and warned me "to have a reverend care of my health," by a speedy and expeditious retreat. On measuring the dimensions of my opponent with my eye, and comparing his anatomy with my own, I was instinctively reminded of the words of Sir John Falstaff, "that the better part of valor was discretion." There seemed to be a wonderful propriety in my opponent's words, and I could not but heartily concur in his opinion, that a retreat was by far the most commendable and safe. Deeming it a mark of ingratitude to neglect such wholesome advice, I found no difficulty in a speedy and punctual compliance. This terminated all my dramatic adventures.

SIMON SHADOW.

INFLUENCE OF THE DRAMA ON THE MIND.

Rigid moralists have alarmed susceptible consciences by deprecating the amusements of the theatre as destructive of religion and derogatory to virtue. They draw no line between a chaste exhibition and a licentious one; but every deviation from precise rectitude is traced to the source of an imagination heated by scenic representations. Quick feelings and lively dispositions are the most open to the evil insinuations of any wrong bias from the stage; but a girl (for I particularly think of that sex on whom an intemperate fancy commits most ravages), whose passions are not curbed and strengthened by reason, will most probably err from misguided sentiment, even though she never witnessed a comedy which derides virtue, or a tragedy which softens vice. Right principles will always yield to wrong impulses in a character whose foundation has never been built upon consistent morality. The danger does not lie in the contagion of a theatre, but in the mind which has been previously prepared to imbibe it; we are infected only with that disease which is congenial to our constitution; if love is to be caught from seeing it represented, or felt because a woman has

Digitized by Google

listened to its description, the fire of imagination must have quenched her delicacy. An admiration of the drama is scarcely ever derived from an enjoyment of its literary beauties; young women dwell with pleasure, not upon the performance, but upon the performers; how such a fine passage was repeated, is not remembered as elucidating the author's intention, but with a reference to the favourite actor's or actress's pronunciation of it. When this is the case, I clearly agree with the abridgers of gaiety, that the impression is dangerous; but the effect of pleasure is here only shown to be the consequence of a flimsy education; if women are ruined, it is not owing to the stimulus of an exceptionable dramatic composition, or to their having been the auditor of a fine one. I do not mean to deny, that a judicious author has the master key to human nature; and that, as he touches it, each complicated ward will unfold itself to his power: but if his key does not fit the lock, it can open no hidden shame; if the feeling does not exist, his art cannot call it forth. It is not necessary that a *double entendre* should be misunderstood; but its depravity should render it despicable: to avoid being guilty, it is not necessary to shun the knowledge of crime; an enemy discovered, is guarded against; once seize the passes which vice may occupy, and his forces can be constantly repulsed. Mirabel, in Farquhar's comedy of "The Inconstant," concentrates in one speech the whole possible danger of the stage. "The play-house," says he, "is the element of poetry, because the region of beauty; the ladies, methinks, have a more triumphant air in the boxes than any where else; they sit commanding on their thrones, with all their subject slaves about them; their best looks, best clothes, shining jewels, sparkling eyes, the treasures of the whole world in a ring—then there is such a hurry of pleasure to transport us; the bustle, noise, gallantry, smiles, love, music and applause; I could wish my whole life were the first night of a new play."

The fair enthusiast responds to this hilarity of expression; and, unless she has been taught to discriminate, forgets that this description comes from a profligate, and (though in unison with his actions) would never be uttered by a sober character. I allow that theatrical amusements have the power of clinging round the taste and fancy, beyond any other species of dissipation; but, under certain restrictions, and steadiness of judgment, I think their influence can never augment the resources of vice. We are not bound to admire a

Digitized by Google

comedy because we have seen it acted, or to applaud a tragedy because it is written in blank verse. The free agency of good sense, and the integrity of principle, will assert their office, although the senses may have been cheated by "blear illusion." When mischief is done by the stage, it is the eye which betrays the understanding; and surely, having discovered the traitor, it is in our power to convert his qualities to our own use. In order to blunt all the arrows of temptation, it may be safe to arrest the mind upon theatrical compositions as one of the most ornamental branches of literature: reading supposes study, and when the powers of attention exert the energies of memory, we may apprehend no danger from effervescent feeling. "To catch the manners living as they rise," is the business of a dramatist; and to mark probable incidents portrayed in nature's language, never can injure the most frigid morality. Acting is the animation of thought; and when we yield to the satisfaction of seeing a favourite author well represented, I cannot see that our religious tenets are extinguished in the pleasure. This exception may, perhaps, be granted me only in favour of the chaste and moral muse; but no pardon can be extorted for those who attend to witness a piece where

"Intrigue is plot, obscenity is wit."

Nor is pardon asked. A female, who feels gratified, or does not express herself disgusted at a licentious performance, has not within her grasp one firm motive to break the force of temptation. To be one of the audience at Farquhar's "Constant Couple," must be distressing to genuine modesty; but it does not follow that it should bereave you of that quality, though you will certainly be confirmed in a distaste for ribaldry. Scene and decoration merely attach to sight; and their *ebloüissant* brilliancy is perfectly harmless as an instrument of wit: delusion acknowledged loses its power; these fairy splendors may just play round the memory, but they never will be riveted to it; and, supposing they should sometimes sparkle into the fancy, their aim has been "to elevate and surprise," and with as little intention of rational sense as Mr. Bayes transfused into his own writings. Without amplifying my position, that the drama, well written, does not sow the seed of crime, or the stage well regulated does not produce the fruit, I will leave the heads of my vindication, sufficiently satisfied with the press of evidence, which my cause exhibits in the virtuous lives of many.

Digitized by Google

theatrical amateurs. That all who frequent play-houses are good, I do not assert; but that all who stay away from them are free from sin, I should be loth to admit. If authors would not propagate evil through the medium of their pens, nor actors exemplify the lesson in their lives, the whole community would consent

> To chase the charms of sense, the pomp of show,
> For useful mirth or salutary woe;
> Bid scenic virtue form the rising age,
> And truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

JOHN DAVY, THE CELEBRATED COMPOSER.

John Davy, Composer, was born in the parish of Upton Hilion, about eight miles from Exeter. When about three years of age, he came into a room where his uncle was playing over a psalm tune on the violoncello; and the moment he heard the instrument, he ran away crying, and was so terrified that he was expected to fall into fits. In the course of some weeks, his uncle repeatedly tried to reconcile him to the instrument, which at last he effected, after a great deal of coaxing, by taking the child's fingers, and making him strike the strings, which at first startled him; but in a few days he became so passionately fond of the amusement, that he took every opportunity of scraping a better acquaintance with this monster, who, in the hands of his keeper, had so dreadfully frightened him with his tremendous noise. Within a short time, by a little attention, he turned the notes of this frightful animal to notes of joy. At this time there was a company of soldiers quartered at Crediton, a town about a mile from Hilion: his uncle took him there frequently; and one day, attending the roll-call, he appeared to be greatly delighted with the fifes; but, not content with hearing them, he borrowed one and very soon picked out several tunes and played them very decently. After this he gathered a quantity of what the people call bitter: it is tubular, and grows in marshy grounds; with this bitter he made several imitations of the fife, and sold them to his schoolfellows. When between four and five years of age, his ear was so very correct, that he could play an easy tune after once or twice hearing it. Before he was quite six years old, a neighbouring smith, into whose house he used frequently to run, lost between twenty and thirty *horse shoes:* diligent search was made after them for many days, but to no pur-

Digitized by Google

pose. Soon after the smith heard some musical sounds, which seemed to come from the upper part of the house; and having listened a sufficient time to be convinced that his ears did not deceive him, he went up stairs, where he discovered the young musician, and his property between the ceiling and the thatched roof. He had selected eight horse shoes, out of more than twenty, to form a complete octave; he had suspended each of them by a single cord, clear from the wall, and, with a small iron rod, was amusing himself by imitating Crediton chimes; which he did with great exactness. This story being made public, and his genius for music increasing hourly, a neighbouring clergyman, of considerable rank in the church, who patronized him, showed him a harpsichord, which he soon got a familiar acquaintance with, and, by his intuitive genius, was shortly able to play any easy lesson which came in the way. He applied himself to the violin, and found but few difficulties to surmount in his progress on that instrument. When eleven years old, he was introduced by his patron to the Rev. Mr. Eastcott, of Exeter, who set him down to the piano forte; and, soon perceiving that the seeds of music were sown in a rich soil, he recommended his friends to place him with some cathedral organist, under whom he might have free access to a good instrument and get some knowledge of the rules of composition. Accordingly Mr. Jackson, organist of Exeter cathedral, was applied to, who consented to take him, and he was articled to him when about twelve years of age. His progress in church was hardly credible; and, in his voluntaries, his invention is not to be described. He continued to improve, and became an excellent performer on the organ. He likewise became a good violin, viole and violoncello player; and composed some vocal quartettos, which were thought elegant by the first professors of music. He then composed some dramatic pieces for Sadlers Wells, &c. and an opera (written by Mr. Holman) for Colman's theatre. He was engaged by Mr. Harris to play in the orchestra, and has since assisted the manager as a composer. For a while he followed the profession of a teacher, and had several respectable pupils; but now applies himself entirely to composition, in which he is reckoned wonderfully quick and correct.

Digitized by Google

EXCULPATION OF RICHARD THE THIRD

From the charges brought against him by different historians and followed by Shakspeare.

It seems then to me to appear, that Fabian, and the authors of the Chronicle of Croyland, who were contemporaries with Richard, charge him directly with none of the crimes since imputed to him, and disculpate him of others. That John Rous, the third contemporary, could know the facts he alleges but by hearsay, confounds the dates of them, dedicates his work to Henry the Seventh, and is an author to whom no credit is due, from the lies and fables with which his work is stuffed. That we have no authors who lived near the time but Lancastrian authors, who wrote to flatter Henry the Seventh, or who spread the tales which he invented. That the murder of prince Edward, son of Henry the Sixth, was committed by king Edward's servants, and is imputed to Richard by no contemporary. That Henry the Sixth was found dead in the tower; that it was not known how he came by his death; and that it was against Richard's interest to murder him. That the duke of Clarence was defended by Richard; that the parliament petitioned for his execution; that no author of the time is so absurd as to charge Richard with being the executioner; and that king Edward took the deed wholly upon himself. That Richard's stay at York, on his brother's death, had no appearance of a design to make himself king. That the ambition of the queen, who attempted to usurp the government, contrary to the then established custom of the realm, gave the first provocation to Richard and the princes of the blood to assert their rights; and that Richard was solicited by the duke of Buckingham to vindicate those rights. That the preparation of an armed force under earl Rivers, the seizure of the tower and treasure, and the equipment of a fleet, by the marquis of Dorset, gave occasion to the princes to imprison the relations of the queen; and that, though they were put to death without trial, (the only cruelty which is *proved* on Richard) it was consonant to the manners of that barbarous and turbulent age, and not till after the queen's party had taken up arms. That the execution of lord Hastings, who had first engaged with Richard against the queen, and whom sir Thomas More confesses Richard was *loth to lose*, can be accounted for by nothing but absolute necessity, and the law of self-defence. That Richard's assumption of the protectorate was in every respect agreeable to the laws and usage; was probably bestowed on him by the universal

Digitized by Google

consent of the council and peers, and was a strong indication that he had then no thought of questioning the right of his nephew. That the tale of Richard aspersing the chastity of his own mother is incredible; it appearing that he lived with her in perfect harmony, and lodged with her in her palace at that very time. That it is as little credible that Richard gained the crown by a sermon of Dr. Shaw and a speech of the duke of Buckingham, if the people only laughed at these orators. That there had been a precontract or marriage between Edward the Fourth and lady Eleanor Talbot;* and that Richard's claim to the crown was founded on the illegitimacy of Edward's children. That a convention of the nobility, clergy and people invited him to accept the crown on that title. That the ensuing parliament ratified the act of the convention, and confirmed the bastardy of Edward's children. That nothing can be more improbable than Richard's having taken no measures before he left London to have his nephews murdered, if he had had any such intention. That the story of sir James Tirrel, as related by sir Thomas More, is a notorious falsehood; sir James Tirrel being at that time master of the horse, in which capacity he had walked at Richard's coronation. That Tirrel's jealousy of sir Richard Ratcliffe is another palpable falsehood; Tirrel being already preferred, and Ratcliffe absent. That all that relates to sir Robert Brakenbury is no less false: Brakenbury either being too good a man to die for a tyrant or murderer, or too bad a man to have refused being his accomplice. That sir Thomas More and lord Bacon both confess that many doubted whether the two princes were murdered in Richard's days or not; and it certainly never was proved that they were murdered by Richard's order. That sir Thomas More relied on nameless and uncertain authority; that it appears by dates and facts that his authorities were bad and false; that if sir James Tirrel and Dighton had really committed the murder, and if Perkin Warbeck had made a voluntary, clear, and probable confession of his imposture, there could have remained no doubt of the murder. That Green, the nameless page, and Will Slaughter, having never been questioned about the murder, there is no reason to believe what is related of them in the supposed tragedy. That sir James Tirrel not being attainted on the death of Richard, but having, on the contrary, been employed in great

* Or Butler, by marriage.

Digitized by Google

services by Henry the Seventh, it is not probable that he was one of the murderers. That lord Bacon owning that Tirrel's confession did not please the king so well as Dighton's; that Tirrel's imprisonment and execution some years afterwards for a new treason, of which we have no evidence, and which appears to have been mere suspicion, destroy all probability of his guilt in the supposed murder of the children. That the impunity of Dighton, if really guilty, was scandalous; and can only be accounted for on the supposition of his being a false witness to serve Henry's cause against Perkin Warbeck. That the silence of the two archbishops, and Henry's not daring to specify the murder of the princes in the act of attainder against Richard, wears all the appearance of their not having been murdered. That Richard's tenderness and kindness to the earl of Warwick, proceeding so far as to proclaim him his successor, betrays no symptom of that cruel nature which would not stick at assassinating any competitor. That it is indubitable that Richard's first idea was to keep the crown but till Edward the Fifth should attain the age of twenty-four. That with this view he did not create his own son prince of Wales till after he had proved the bastardy of his brother's children. That there is no proof that those children were murdered. That Richard made, or intended to make, his nephew, Edward the Fifth, walk at his coronation. That there is strong presumption, from the parliament roll and from the Chronicle of Croyland, that both princes were living some time after sir Thomas More fixes the date of their deaths. That when his own son was dead, Richard was so far from intending to get rid of his wife, that he proclaimed his nephews, first the earl of Warwick, and then the earl of Lincoln, his heirs apparent. That there is not the least probability of his having poisoned his wife, who died of a languishing distemper: that no proof was ever intended to be given of it; that a bare supposition of such a crime, without proofs or very strong presumptions, is scarce ever to be credited. That he seems to have had no intention of marrying his niece, but to have amused her with the hopes of that match, to prevent her marrying Richmond. That Buck would not have dared to quote her letter as extant in the earl of Arundel's library, if it had not been there; that others of Buck's assertions having been corroborated by subsequent discoveries, leave no doubt of his veracity on this; and that letter disculpates Richard from poisoning his wife; and only shows the impa-

Digitized by Google

tience of his niece to be queen. That it is probable the queen dowager knew her second son was living, and connived at the appearance of Lambert Simnel, to feel the temper of the nation. That Henry the Seventh certainly thought that she and the earl of Lincoln were privy to the existence of Richard duke of York, and that Henry lived in terror of his appearance. That the different conduct of Henry, with regard to Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck, implies how different an opinion he had of them; that, in the first case, he used the most natural and most rational methods to prove him an impostor; whereas his whole behaviour in Perkin's case was mysterious, and betrayed his belief or doubt that Warbeck was the true duke of York. That it was morally impossible for the dutchess of Burgundy, at the distance of twenty-seven years, to instruct a Flemish lad so perfectly in all that had passed in the court of England, that he would not have been detected in a few hours. That she could not inform him, nor could he know, what had passed in the tower, unless he was the true duke of York. That if he was not the true duke of York, Henry had nothing to do but to confront him with Tirrel and Dighton, and the imposture must have been discovered. That Perkin never being confronted with the queen-dowager, and the princesses, her daughters, proves that Henry did not dare to trust to their acknowledging him. That if he was not the true duke of York, he might have been detected by not knowing the queen and princesses, if shown to him, without his being told who they were. That it is not pretended that Perkin ever failed in language, accent, or circumstances; and that his likeness to Edward the Fourth is allowed. That there are gross and manifest blunders in his pretended confession. That Henry was so afraid of not ascertaining a good account of the purity of his English accent, that he makes him learn English twice over. That lord Bacon did not dare to adhere to this ridiculous account; but forges another, though in reality not much more credible. That a number of Henry's best friends, as the lord chamberlain, who placed the crown on his head, knights of the garter, and men of the fairest characters, being persuaded that Perkin was the true duke of York, and dying for that belief, without recanting, makes it very rash to deny that he was so. That the proclamation in Rymer's Fœdera against Jane Shore, for plotting with the marquis Dorset, not with lord Hastings, destroys all the credit of sir Thomas More, as to what relates to the latter peer.

Digitized by Google

In short, that Henry's character, as we have received it from his own apologists, is so much worse and more hateful than Richard's, that we may well believe Henry invented and propagated by far the greater part of the slanders against Richard; that Henry, not Richard, probably put to death the true duke of York; as he did the earl of Warwick; and that we are not certain whether Edward the Fifth was murdered; nor, if he was, by whose order he was murdered.

After all that has been said, it is scarce necessary to add a word on the supposed discovery that was made of the skeletons of the two young princes, in the reign of Charles the Second. Two skeletons found in that dark abyss of so many secret transactions, with no marks to ascertain the time, or the age of their interment, can certainly verify nothing. We must believe both princes died there, before we can believe that their bones were found there; and upon what that belief can be founded, or how we shall cease to doubt whether Perkin Warbeck was not one of those children, I am at a loss to guess.

As little is it requisite to argue on the grants made by Richard the Third to his supposed accomplices in that murder, because the argument will serve either way. It was very natural that they, who had tasted most of Richard's bounty, should be suspected as the instruments of his crimes. But till it can be proved that those crimes were committed, it is in vain to bring evidence to show who assisted him in perpetrating them. Indeed one knows not what to think of the death of Edward the Fifth: one can neither entirely acquit Richard of it, nor condemn him; because there are no proofs on either side; and though a court of justice would, from that defect of evidence, absolve him, opinion may fluctuate backwards and forwards, and at last remain in suspense.

For the younger brother, the balance seems to incline greatly on the side of Perkin Warbeck, as the true duke of York; and if one was saved, one knows not how nor why to believe that Richard destroyed only the elder.

We must leave this whole story dark, though not near so dark as we found it; and it is perhaps as wise to be uncertain on one portion of our history, as to believe so much as is believed in all histories, though very probably as falsely delivered to us as the period which we have been here examining.

Digitized by Google

POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

How irresistible is the power of conscience! It is a viper which twines itself round the heart, and cannot be shook off. It lays fast hold of us; it lies down with us, and stings us in our sleep. It rises with us, and preys upon our vitals. Hence ancient moralists compared an evil conscience to a vulture feeding upon the liver, and the pangs that are felt by the one to the throes of the other; supposing at the same time the vulture's hunger to be insatiable, and this entrail to be most exquisitely sensible of pain, and to grow as fast as it is devoured. What can be a stronger representation of the most lingering and most acute corporeal pains? Yet, strong as it is, it falls greatly short of the anguish of a guilty conscience. Imagination, when at rest, cannot conceive the horrors which, when troubled, it can excite, or the tortures to which it can give birth.

What must have been the state of mind of Bessus, a native of Pelonia, in Greece, when he disclosed the following authenticated fact! His neighbours seeing him one day extremely earnest in pulling down some birds' nests, and passionately destroying their young, could not help taking notice of it, and upbraiding him with his ill nature and cruelty to poor creatures, that, by nestling so near him, seemed to court his protection and hospitality; he replied that their voice was to him insupportable, as they never ceased twitting him with the murder of his father.

This execrable villany had lain concealed many years, and had never been suspected. In all probability it never would have come to light, had not the avenging fury of conscience drawn, by these extraordinary means, a public acknowledgment of it from the parricide's own mouth.

Bessus is not the only person that has stood self-convicted. Though the discovery has not been distinguished by such a strange circumstance, many have made a voluntary confession, and sought for a refuge from the torments of conscience in death. What a lesson for all men to keep a conscience void of offence!

INTERVIEW BETWEEN GEESE.

The following curious circumstance is said to have been substantiated by evidence at the assises of York, in England, where John Shields and George Nicholson were charged with stealing sixteen geese, the property of Mr. Blanchard, of Bulmer.

Digitized by Google

The facts of this case were shortly these:—On Sunday the 31st of October, all the geese of the prosecutor were safe in his field; on the following day, sixteen were missing from his flock, part of which he found alive at York the same day, in the possession of the prisoners, who had been offering them for sale. The prosecutor, on examining the geese, said he was almost sure they were the geese which had been stolen; but in order to attain perfect satisfaction, he hit upon the following method:—The geese he had lost had been taken from their companions, parents, and relations; of course, if brought together, they would recognise each other. But not being willing that so important and interesting a point should rest on his own evidence and judgment, he took with him the constable and another person, whose united testimony would not only satisfy the court, but also his neighbours, whom he thought rather incredulous on the subject. A chaise was accordingly provided for the purpose, and the geese, thus respectively attended, returned in triumph to their native place.

These witnesses proceeded with all sober sadness to detail the particulars of this interesting interview. On the arrival of the carriage, the ancient gander came out on the road to welcome the approach of his lost family: the cackling of the other geese was heard at a distance, and as soon as the captive ones were released from their confinement, they hastened with impatience to their companions; and here a scene ensued which was not to be described; the mutual congratulations on this occasion were so loud and sincere, as to leave no doubt in the minds of these respectable witnesses, that these geese were indisputably of the same family.

The effect which this description had on the risible faculties of the court and audience may be easier conceived than described. Repeated bursts of laughter discomposed the bench, the bar, and the audience, and it was a considerable time before gravity could be restored. The jury found the prisoners—Guilty.

As Diogenes was one day taking his repast at a tavern, he saw Demosthenes passing by, and invited him in. Demosthenes refused. "What," said Diogenes, "do you object to being in a tavern? your master is seen here every day;" meaning by this term the common people. Thus Diogenes intimated, that the orators and declaimers were *the slaves of the multitude.*

Digitized by Google

A FRAGMENT OF ANCIENT POETRY.

By George Wethers.

LORDLY gallants! tell me this,
(Though my safe content you weigh not,)
In your greatness what one bliss
Have you gain'd that I enjoy not?
You have honour, you have wealth,
I have peace, and I have health;
All the day I merry make,
And at night no care I take.

Bound to none my fortune be;
This or that man's fall I fear not;
Him I love that loveth me;
For the rest a pin I care not.
You are sad when others chafe,
And grow merry as they laugh;
I that hate it, and am free,
Laugh and weep as pleaseth me.

You may boast of favours shown,
Where your service is applied;
But my pleasures are my own,
And to no man's humors tied;
You oft flatter, soothe, and feign,
I such baseness do disdain;
And to none be slave I would,
Though my fetters might be gold.

By great titles some believe
Highest honours are attain'd;
And yet kings have power to give
To their fools what these have gain'd.
Where they favour, there they may
All their names of honour lay;
But I look not rais'd to be
Till mine own wing carry me.

Seek to raise your titles higher,
They are toys not worth my sorrow;
Those that we to-day admire,
Prove the age's scorn to-morrow.

Digitized by Google

Take your honours; let me find
Virtue in a free born mind:
This the greatest kings that be
Cannot give nor take from me.

Though I vainly do not vaunt
Large demesnes to feed my pleasure,
I have favours where you want,
That would buy respect with treasure.
You have lands lie here and there;
But my wealth is every where;
And this aideth to my store,
Fortune cannot make me poor.

Say you purchase with your pelf
Some respect where you importune;
Those may love me for myself,
That regard you for your fortune.
Rich, or born of high degree,
Fools, as well as you, may be;
But that peace, in which I live,
No descent nor wealth can give.

If you boast that you may gain
The respect of high-born beauties;
Know I never woo'd in vain,
Nor preferred scorned duties.
She I love hath all delight,
Rosy red with lily white,
And, who'er your mistress be,
Flesh and blood as good as she.

Note of me was never took
For my woman-like perfections;
But so like a man I look,
It hath gain'd me best affections.
For my love, as many showers
Have been wept as have for yours;
And yet none doth me condemn
For abuse or scorning them.

Digitized by Google

Though of dainties you have store
To delight a choicer palate,
Yet your taste is pleas'd no more
Than is mine in poor sallad.
You, to please your senses, feed,
But I eat, good blood to breed,
And am most delighted then
When I spend it like a man.

Though you lord it over me,
You in vain thereof have brav'd;
For those lusts my servants be,
Whereunto your minds are slav'd.
To yourselves you wise appear,
But, alas! deceiv'd you are;
You do foolish me esteem,
And are that which I do seem.

When your faults I open lay,
You are mov'd and mad with vexing;
But you ne'er could do or say
Aught to drive me to perplexing.
Therefore my despised power
Greater is by far than your;
And, whate'er you think of me,
In your minds you poorer be.

You are pleased more or less
No men well or ill report you,
And show discontentedness
When the times forbear to court you.
That in which my pleasures be,
No man can divide from me;
And my care it adds not to,
Whatso others say or do.

Be not proud, because you view
You by thousands are attended;
For, alas! it is not you,
But your fortune that's befriended.

Digitized by Google

Where I show of love have got,
Such a danger fear I not;
Since they nought can seek of me,
But for love belov'd to be.

When your hearts have every thing,
You are pleasantly dispos'd;
But I can both laugh and sing,
Though my foes have me inclos'd.
Yea, when dangers me do hem,
I delight in scorning them,
More than you in your renown,
Or a king can in his crown.

You so bravely domineer
Whilst the sun upon you shineth;
Yet, if any storm appear,
Basely then your mind declineth,
But or shine, or rain, or blow,
I my resolutions know.
Living, dying, thrall, or free,
At one height my mind shall be.

When in thraldom I have lain,
Me not worth your thought you prized;
But your malice was in vain,
For your favours I despised.
And, howe'er you value me,
I with praise shall thought of be,
When the world esteems you not,
And your names shall be forgot.

In these thoughts my riches are;
Now though poor or mean you deem me,
I am pleas'd, and do not care
How the times or you esteem me.
For those toys that make you gay,
Are but play-games for a day;
And when Nature claims her due,
I as brave shall be as you.

Digitized by Google

PROLOGUE

To the new dramatic entertainment of "NOT AT HOME."

OUR author, anxious for your approbation,
Has sent me here by way of preparation;
But undetermin'd still what means to use
To recommend this bantling of his muse,
From thought to thought with double haste he rov'd,
As fancy led, or judgment disapprov'd:
I could not bear to see him thus perplex'd,
So cried, "I'll take your title for my text."
At home, or *not at home*—Oh! 'tis a theme
As vast as folly's never-failing stream.
Why, *not at home's* the voice of modern days,
Which every age, and sex, and rank, displays;
And coxcombs, from the 'prentice to the peer,
Disdain the limits of their proper sphere.
Observe my lord—the copy of his groom—
In all the scenes of vulgar life *at home;*
At home to all the pugilistic train,
Lord of the ring, and hero of the rein:
But *not at home* when tradesmen would be paid,
Or worth and genius supplicate his aid;
And least *at home*, oh mean! and grovelling mind!
In that high station which his birth assign'd.
In those dull moments when *ennui* prevails,
And beaux forget to call, and scandal fails,
What dame of fashion e'er can condescend
At home the solitary hours to spend?
At home! oh monstrous! is there then no way
To kill the languor of the irksome day?
Call my barouche! I'll drive to lady Bloom:
Our mutual watchword still is—*Not at home:*
And Mrs. Shuttle, odious, rustic creature!
Whose suppers we endure from mere good nature.
Brisk at his post, and practis'd in reply,
The powder'd footman tells the ready lie;
Not so the simple lad just come to town,
Scarce half a coxcomb, more than half a clown,
With awkward shame he turns his head away,
And blushing stammers—*Not at home* to-day.

Digitized by Google

To Bond-street next, to cheapen fans and laces,
Or buy at Overton's the loves and graces.
These follies drive away the morning spleen;
Rout, opera, concert, close the evening scene.
Thus having trod the giddy circle o'er,
Till fashion falls, and folly charms no more,
Listless and tir'd, at length she condescends
To pass one night *at home*—but *sees her friends*.
Forth fly a thousand cards, and each conveys
Her summons, couch'd in true laconic phrase:
Her ladyship *at home!*—Well! view her there:
Order your coach at ten to Berkeley square;
Along the crowded staircase force your way,
Where costly flowers their mingled sweets display;
Approach the long saloon, where, blazing bright,
Rich chandeliers refract the varied light.
Her sofa deck'd with oriental pride,
All Egypt's monsters grinning at her side,
'Midst shapeless mockeries of Greece and Rome,
In tawdry pomp—my lady is *at home*.
While these gay scenes her restless thoughts employ,
She scarcely feels a transient gleam of joy;
With vacant eye reviews the splendid dome,
And sighs that—Happiness—is *not at home*.
Not such their home whom love has taught to know
From that blest source what real transports flow.
Home! 'tis the name of all that sweetens life;
It speaks the warm affection of a wife,
The lisping babe that prattles on the knee,
In all the playful grace of infancy;
The spot where fond parental love may trace
The growing virtues of a blooming race:
Oh! 'tis a word of more than magic spell,
Whose sacred power the wanderer best can tell;
He, who long distant from his native land,
Feels at her name his eager soul expand:
Whether as Patriot, Husband, Father, Friend,
To that dear point his thoughts, his wishes bend;
And still he owns, where'er his footsteps roam,
Life's choicest blessings center all—*at home*.

Digitized by Google

COCK FIGHTING.

The origin of *cock-fighting* is thus truly and classically recorded: When Themistocles led an army of his countrymen against their barbarian neighbours, he beheld two *cocks* engaging in furious combat. The spectacle was not lost upon him; he made his forces halt, and thus addressed them: "These *cocks*, my gallant soldiery, are not fighting for their country, their paternal gods, nor do they endure this for the monuments of their ancestors, for their offspring, or for the sake of glory in the cause of liberty; the only motive is, that the one is heroically resolved not to yield to the other." This impressive harangue rekindled their valor, and led them to conquest. After their decisive victories over the Persians and Athenians, it was decreed by law, that one day should be set apart in every year for the public exhibition of cock-fighting, at the expense of the state.

GARRICK AND JOHNSON.

Mr. Garrick was once present with Dr. Johnson at the table of a nobleman, where, amongst other guests, was one, of whose near connexions some disgraceful anecdote was then in circulation. It had reached the ears of Johnson, who, after dinner, took an opportunity of relating it in the most acrimonious manner. Garrick, who sat next to him, pinched his arm, trod upon his toe, and made use of other means to interrupt the thread of his narration; but all was in vain. The doctor proceeded, and when he had finished his story, he turned gravely round to Garrick, of whom before he had taken no notice whatever. "Thrice," said he, "Davy, have you trod upon my toe; thrice have you pinched my arm; and now, if what I have related be a falsehood, convict me before this company." Garrick replied not a word; but he frequently declared afterwards, that he never felt so much perturbation, even when he met "his father's ghost."

CURIOUS HOAX.

The neighbourhood of Bedford-street, Covent-Garden, was lately the scene of much confusion. Some wag had taken the trouble of going to different tradespeople, and of ordering various articles of furniture, and of other descriptions, to be sent to the house

Digitized by Google

of Mr. Griffith, an apothecary in that street. At an early hour in the morning, carpets, boxes of candles, articles of household furniture, &c. were sent. The family being out of town, and no person but the maid servant at home, she of course refused to receive them; the consequence was, that the porters were obliged to take up their loads and walk home again, amid the jeers of an immense concourse of people, assembled to witness this curious hoax. Fresh arrivals in the course of the day induced the crowd still to remain: among these arrivals were a patent mangle, an enormous large rocking cradle, three wagon loads of coals, &c. At length, to complete the joke, at the dining hour, *eight post-chaises*, from different parts of the country, with some of the most intimate friends of Mr. Griffith, all anxious, having received cards of invitation for that purpose, to taste his poultry and game; but the populace made *game* of them, and, disappointments being the order of the day, the horses' heads were turned, and the guests departed. The arrival of goods continued till a late hour in the evening.

INSTANCE OF STRENGTH,

Exemplified in the person of King John the First of Portugal.

John was so secure in the affections of his subjects, that he frequently walked abroad without any attendant. In one of his morning perambulations, he chanced to observe an old man who was lame and blind, at the opposite side of a rivulet, waiting till some one came to guide his steps over a plank thrown across it. As there was no one at hand but the king, he instantly approached, threw him on his shoulder, and carried him, in that posture, to the end of the next road. The poor man, surprised at the ease with which he was carried, exclaimed, "I wish Don John had a legion of such stout fellows to humble the pride of the Castilians, who deprived me of the use of my leg."

Here, at the request of the king, he gave a short account of the several actions in which he had been engaged. In the sequel, his majesty recollected that this was Fonseca, the brave soldier who had courageously fought by his side in the memorable battle of Aljubarrotta, that fixed the crown on his head. Grieved to see him in such a distressed state, he desired him to call next morning at the royal palace, to know how he came to be neglected by his servants in power. "Who shall I inquire for?" quoth the brave

Digitized by Google

Belisarius. "For your gallant companion in the battle of Aljubarrotta," replied the king, departing.

A person who stood at a distance, and who witnessed the scene, shortly after accosted Fonseca, and informed him of what his sovereign had done. "Ah," said he, when he recovered his surprise, "I am now convinced of the truth of what has so often been asserted, the shoulders of monarchs are certainly accustomed to bear great burdens. I rejoice in having devoted the prime of my life to the service of one who, like the prince of Uz, is legs to the lame, and eyes to the blind."

Dr. HENNIKER being in private conversation with the late earl of Chatham, his lordship asked him, amongst other questions, how he defined wit. "My lord," said the doctor, "wit is like what a pension would be, given by your lordship to your humble servant,—a good thing well applied."

PARENTAL DIGNITY.

WHEN Lawrence Celsus was elected Doge, in the year 1631, his father, who was still living, evinced on the occasion a most singular weakness of mind.

This old man, thinking himself much superior to his son, could not condescend to be uncovered in his presence; and not being able to avoid it, without failing of that respect which was due to the chief of the state, he determined to go always bareheaded.

This conduct of a person otherways respectable, only afforded the nobles a subject for ridicule, without making any impression on their minds. But the doge, much hurt to see that his father had made himself an object of raillery by his absurd behaviour, ordered a cross to be put in the front of the cap which he wore as doge. His father had not the least objection to resume the use of a cap; and, whenever he saw his son, he would take it off, saying thus: "It is the cross which I salute, and not my son; for having given him life, he should be inferior to me."

Fabius Maximus, the Roman dictator, thought very differently to the doge's father. This great man went on horseback to meet his son, Quintius Fabius Maximus, who had just been created consul. The young man seeing his father approach him, without descending from his horse, commanded him to dismount. Fabius

Digitized by Google

immediately obeyed, and embraced his son. "It rejoices me," said he, "to see that you conduct yourself like a consul."

This fierce Roman thought it more honourable to have a son who knew how to maintain his dignity, than to see himself respected by the first magistrate of the republic.

MAGNANIMITY OF GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

THE uncommon method which Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, employed to obtain the friendship of Banier, so celebrated for his attachment to this prince, and distinguished for the many victorious battles he fought, deserves to be recorded. Perhaps there never was a king who adopted such means to get a friend.

Gustavus's father, Charles the Tenth, whose reign was marked with cruelty, killed Banier's father. One day when Gustavus was hunting with the young Banier, he requested him to quit the chase, and ride with him into a wood. When they came into a thick part of it, the king alighted from his horse, and said to Banier, "*My father was the death of yours. If you wish to revenge his death by mine, kill me immediately; if not, be my friend for ever.*" Banier, overcome by his feelings, and astonished at such magnanimity, threw himself at Gustavus's feet, and swore eternal friendship for him.

THE following account of the discovery of a book is very remarkable. It is contained in a letter from Dr. Samuel Ward, then master of Sydney College, Cambridge, to Archbishop Usher, dated June 27, 1626.

There was the last week a codfish brought from Colchester to our market to be sold: in the cutting up of which, there was found in the maw of the fish a thing that was hard, which proved to be a book bound in parchment; the leaves were glewed together with a jelly; and being taken out, it did smell much at first, but after washing it, Mr. Mede did look into it. It was printed, and he formed a table of the contents. The book was intitled "A Preparation to the Cross." Now it is found to have been made by Richard Tracey, of whom Boyle makes mention, and says that he flourished in 1550.

The book so recovered, was published the following year, with this quaint title, "Vox Piscis; or, the Book Fish: containing three

Digitized by Google

treatises which were found in the belly of a codfish, in Cambridge market, on Midsummer eve last, 1626." 12mo.

The British obituaries, for 1809, mention the death and give the character of a curious personage well known to mariners. "Died," says the European Magazine, "a heroine of some celebrity, distinguished by the name of Irish Nell, in Well-court, Wapping. Her house had long been a friendly asylum for travellers of every description. The inhabitant of the frozen regions, and the negro from the sultry clime of Ethiopia, often sought refuge under her roof. Jews, Turks, Christians and Pagans received the same welcome. Their accommodation was liberal, on reasonable terms; and, unlike many who keep lodging houses for the reception of foreigners, she seldom practised an imposition. In her will, she requested to be buried in her best clothes, and left five pounds, as an indemnity to the parish, in case the penalty should be exacted of them for suffering her to be interred in linen. The remains of poor Nell were interred in Stepney burial ground, in the presence of a great number of mourners. The following epitaph has been written on her head-stone:

Flashy Nell, of old Wapping, lies under this clay,
In a new gown and petticoat deck'd out quite gay;
Death call'd at her lodgings; she put on her best;
He took her away, to his dwelling of rest.

The following ludicrous anecdote is related of Francis the First, king of France. This prince, who was a great patron of literature, was, on his return from divine service to dinner, presented by some distinguished poet with an elegant *epigram*. This the king read whilst he was dining, and declared to those about him, that he had never been more agreeably feasted than by this *epigram*. One of the courtiers hearing his master make this declaration, hastened to the kitchen, and calling the cook to him, asked what this *epigram* was which he had dressed for the king, imagining it to be some new and dainty dish. The cook denying that he had sent up any new dish, the courtier was so provoked that he beat the cook, and the matter was finally brought before the king to determine, who did not fail heartily to laugh at the courtier's stupidity.

Digitized by Google

The following little poem, written by a celebrated traveller through the United States, was recited by Mr. Fennell at the Masonic Hall, and, receiving from his elegant delivery every advantage the author could desire, was heard with great pleasure and applause. The famous Natural Bridge of Virginia is the subject, of which the author of the poem says, "The vestiges of Roman grandeur and Athenian elegance fade into insignificance before the miraculous pile of nature, embosomed between two hills, in the deep solitudes of Virginia. As the vision of the bridge bursts on the eye, you are rapt in admiration. The majesty and grace combined in the arch, through which the blue expanse of heaven is visible; the huge masses of rock lying in wild disorder in the stream, and producing a rippling which alone disturbs the solitude of the place; the whole scene fills the mind with unspeakable amazement, and impresses it with a conviction, that the hand which raised the structure was divine."

THE NATURAL BRIDGE.....A POEM.

When Fancy from the azure skies,
On earth came down, before unseen;
She bade the wondrous structure rise,
And haply chose this sylvan scene.
The Graces too, with sprightly air,
Assisted in the work divine;
The arch they form'd with nicest care,
And made the murm'ring stream incline.
Then Fancy, from the pile above,
Would gaze with rapture, bending o'er;
And charm'd, behold the streamlet rove,
While Echo mock'd its feeble roar.
And here, perhaps, the Indian stood,
With uplift hands, and eye amaz'd,
As sudden, from the devious wood,
He first upon the fabric gaz'd!
See Tadmor's domes and halls of state
In undistinguish'd ruin lie;
See Rome's proud empire yield to fate,
And claim the mournful pilgrim's sigh.
But while relentless time impairs
The monuments of crumbling art,
This pile unfading beauty wears,
Eternal in its every part!

Digitized by Google

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

THEATRICAL JOURNAL.

For March, 1811.

1	Friday 1st,	Richard Coeur de Lion—Spanish Barber—Irish Widow. For the benefit of Mrs. Wilmot.
2	Saturday 2d,	Surrender of Calais—Scheming Lieutenant. For the benefit of Mr. Hardinge.
3	Monday 4th,	Merchant of Venice—Harlequin in the Moon—Old Maid. For the benefit of Mrs. Francis.
4	Wednesday 6th,	Coriolanus—Poor Soldier. For the benefit of Mr. Robbins, architect and scene painter.
5	Friday 8th,	Alexander the Great—Shelty's Frolic—Children in the Wood. For the benefit of Mrs. Seymour.
6	Saturday 9th,	John Bull—Valentine and Orson.
7	Monday 11th,	Town and Country—Le Foret Noire—Mayor of Garrat. For the benefit of Master Whale.
8	Wednesday 13th,	Adrian and Orilla—Harlequin in the Moon—High life below stairs. For the benefit of Mrs. Twaits.
9	Friday 15th,	Poor Gentleman—Half an hour after Supper—Spanish Barber. For the benefit of Miss White.
10	Saturday 16th,	Gustavus Vasa (Gustavus by a gentleman being his first appearance on any stage)—Forty Thieves.
11	Monday 18th,	Reconciliation—Columbus.
12	Wednesday 20th,	Busy Body—Blue Beard.
13	Monday 25th,	Richard the Third (Richard, Mr. COOKE, his first appearance in Philadelphia)—The Review.
14	Wednesday 27th,	Richard the Third (Richard, Mr. Cooke, his second appearance)—Matrimony.
15	Friday 29th,	Man of the World (Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant, Mr. Cooke, his third appearance)—Hunter of the Alps.
16	Saturday 30th,	Merchant of Venice (Shylock, Mr. Cooke, his fourth appearance)—Budget of Blunders.

GUSTAVUS VASA.

In the history of our stage, the present may be called the season of novelties. Among those we have to commemorate is a young candidate for histrionic fame, who, on the sixteenth of this month,

Digitized by Google

appeared (for the first time on any stage) in the character of Gustavus Vasa. This gentleman is, we understand, a native of America; and, on many accounts, lays claim to our particular attention and to the fostering protection of the public. Though labouring under grievous disadvantages, his performance manifested natural powers, upon which we expect to have many future opportunities of expatiating with pleasure and with praise. For though agitated to an excess we never before witnessed, he disclosed qualifications which nothing but unpardonable neglect, or incurable complexional diffidence, can prevent from raising him to a very respectable rank on the stage. He, however, showed much less judgment in his selecting the part of Gustavus than in his reading it; since, in the whole round of acting plays, we cannot think of one less calculated to set off a young beginner to advantage.

The most prominent qualifications for the stage which this gentleman enjoys is a voice of most singular excellence—clear as a bell—musical, full toned, strong, and of great compass. He has besides a very handsome face, and is finely moulded in that seat of gracefulness, the chest and shoulders. In his utterance of the speeches, he manifested judgment: but the novelty of his situation weighed heavily upon his spirits, and fettered his action.

Exclusive of the recommendations we have mentioned, there is one our young candidate possesses to an excess almost unexampled; we mean Modesty; which, though it obstructed his efforts on that night, and in all likelihood will do so a few nights more, is so universally observed to be the associate of real merit, that we cannot help considering it, in the case of this gentleman, as an infallible prognostic of success. Having heard, from the best authority in the theatre, the painful state of his feelings on that occasion, we are astonished that he was able to go through the character at all; and much more so, that he should disclose such strong proofs of talent, that we have no hesitation in predicting he will one day be an ornament to our stage. Industry, which we are informed he possesses, the aid of a good dancing master, and the practice of a season or two, will enable him to display that fine voice of his with credit to himself, advantage to the managers, and delight to the public.

To hope that we can reason away those exquisitely painful feelings which arise from complexional modesty, were absurd; as well

Digitized by Google

might we reason down a fever, or argue away the complexion of our hair; yet it may do much towards abating the rigor of their dominion over us to reflect, that, however inconvenient or obstructive it may be at first, modesty never fails to enlist the esteem and partiality of mankind in its favour; and that, though it should occasionally diminish the powers of the possessor, it in an equal degree operates as a charm upon the opinion and affections of those who witness its effects.

We shall now bid adieu to our young Gustavus, first begging leave to offer to his consideration a few words taken from a letter of the illustrious Burke to a person he honoured with his patronage, but whose modesty obstructed his advancement in life. After expatiating upon the young gentleman's talents, he goes on and says, "but this is too big for your modesty. Oh! this modesty, in time and place, is a charming virtue, and the grace of all other virtues: BUT IT IS, SOMETIMES, THE WORST ENEMY THEY HAVE."

MR. COOKE.

On Monday, the 25th instant, the people of Philadelphia were gratified with the long wished for sight of this great actor. Saturday being the day appointed for taking seats in the boxes, the dawning of the day presented the portico of the theatre filled with people, some of whom had sat up there the whole night, for the purpose of insuring seats. In a short time they became clamorous, riot succeeded to clamors, and the opening, or rather the forcing of the doors, presented a spectacle which though at the time rather too serious to some, was to all but those personally concerned as ridiculous as can well be imagined; while the opposite side of Chesnut street was lined with a concourse of spectators piled upon each other's shoulders, and gaping at the scuffle as if the theatre were on fire. After much shouldering and brawling, some contusions of pericrania, and divers rents of christian gabardine, the boxes were taken; and all object of contest being thus removed, the crowd retired full fraught with the interesting intelligence, and impatient to entertain themselves and bore their friends with the important recital.

Yorick's Diego, he who, as Sterne relates in his Tristram Shandy, set Strasburgh in an uproar with his nose, did not more exclusively occupy the mouths and ears of that famous city, than did

Digitized by Google

Cooke those of this. It was one o'clock in the morning before the name ceased to reverberate through the city, and "have you got a seat?—How shall I get a seat?—How shall I contrive to see him?—Oh I shall never see him!—Dear me, I shall never get a seat!—I'd give ten dollars for a seat!—Alas, he'll go away before I see him!—Will he play Richard again?—What an unfortunate creature I am!—I shall never see Cooke in Richard!"—with similar questions and lamentations; and little else were heard throughout Philadelphia all the evening of Saturday; those who went to bed dreamed of Cooke; and there is good reason to apprehend that this very extraordinary personage employed a larger share of the SUNDAY thoughts and conversation of our city than was consistent with strict piety. As it fares with some British kings, whose bodies are deposited at Westminster Abbey while their hearts are locked up at Windsor, so it fared with many a janty spark and lady fair, whose pretty persons were disposed through our various churches, while their hearts were locked up with Richard and his horse in the play-house.

On opening the doors on Monday evening the tumult was as great and the struggles to get places no less, than those of Saturday. The conduct of the managers on the occasion was praiseworthy: they would not allow a ticket to be sold till five o'clock, with a view to the persons who had taken boxes being enabled to get into their seats without interruption; nor would they suffer more tickets to be disposed of than would suffice to fill the house. When the hour for admission came however, the doors were so blocked up and beset that the managers opened the back door and gave the ladies access to their boxes across the stage.

It was not altogether unreasonable to think as many people did, that there could be but one opinion formed upon Cooke's performance of Richard; and that he who in the theatres of London, Dublin and Edinburgh had torn the laurel from every rival's brow and kept it firmly on his own for many years, would, though he might not please every individual, have escaped ungracious and inhospitable censure in this country, where, sooth to say, a first rate performer of Richard had never before been seen.* Nevertheless we thought differently; and there are those who, before Cooke came here, heard

* Though Cooper and Hodgkinson displayed much spirit in Gloster, and Mr. Fennell speaks it (and what does he not?) elegantly, we cannot truly call any of them *first rate* Richards.

Digitized by Google

us remark, that there were in Philadelphia many to whom the very excellence of that actor, and the universality of his fame, would serve as motives for censure; and that the probability was that GARRICK, if he were alive, and were to appear on our stage, would by some be thought an actor inferior even to Cooke—for no other reason but because he was a better. He has yet much of our common nature to learn who does not know that the affectation of knowledge and discernment is one of the resources of ignorance; that men are pretty generally disposed to appear wise in proportion to their want of wisdom, and that those who wish to set up as dealers in sagacity, without having any stock in trade, are vastly fond of paradoxes, as things the failure in which they think leaves them at worst no lower than they were before. In the intellectual as in the commercial world, he who sets up business on false capital may be a bankrupt, but cannot possibly lose any thing.

Besides, in the endless diversity of human opinion, the same object will not only strike two different persons of sound judgment as not the same, but will strike the judicious, and the injudicious as being diametrically opposite. Even men eminent for learning and genius have been led away from common sense and truth by the will-o-the-wisp suggestions of exorbitant vanity, and a metaphysical paradox hunter would rather wheedle his neighbour into the crater of Vesuvius than let his perverted pride go unsatiated. To acknowledge that there is any thing of which we cannot judge as well as any other person, is a pill too bitter for some of us to swallow; and there are multitudes utterly incompetent to many of the meanest offices in life, who would yet be highly affronted with any one that doubted their capacity, or, as they would call it, their *right*, to decide at once upon questions which would make wise men hesitate and puzzle the most learned.

Moreover, that kind, or as the phrase is, that school of acting which began with Garrick, and lay in a trance since his death till Cooke revived it, was almost as unknown to this country, till Cooke visited us, as it was to Great Britain before the appearance of Garrick; and with many here it is as it was with Partridge, in Tom Jones,—they can see no merit in Cooke as an actor, because he does exactly what a man in real life would do if he were in the situation of the character he represents. To some palates molasses is preferable to sallad as a condiment. Habit makes it so: and the sarcastic, biting Gloster himself is disgusting unless he be made a

Digitized by Google

very *sweet* fellow. Besides we may see Nature every day in the open streets and fields for nothing: why then pay a dollar, and get a squeezing, for seeing it on the stage? for we see little else in Cooke.

Since then there are wisewoulds, who impeach the judgment of Cooke's admirers, and set up their opinions against the nearly unanimous voice of the most luminous and learned critics in this country and Great Britain, it becomes more than ever incumbent on the public critic not only to assert and promulgate his opinion, but to establish his decisions by fair reasoning. The task is laborious,—it is unexpected too; but it is one we undertake with readiness; not with the vain hope of convincing those who, taking their own will for their warrant, not reason for their guide, would rather remain to doomsday in error, than own they could possibly be wrong; but to lend the light which experience has put in our hands to those who have not yet been in the way of acquiring it, and to warn them against having too much faith in the judgment of those heaven-born critics, who pretend to know all things while they have most things yet to learn. In order to do justice to the actor, we must accompany him, step by step, through the character, and compare his representation of it with the evident drift and intention of the poet.

Though Richard is styled an historical play, the character of Gloster is, as much as Prospero, Falstaff, or Mercutio, a mere creation of Shakspeare's wonderworking fancy. How far it comported, in a moral view, with justice or integrity, to calumniate Richard the Third, we will not here insist upon. Perhaps our bard was really led astray by fragments of old stories, as to the character of Richard; but there is reason to apprehend that his object was to please Queen Elizabeth, by slandering the house of York, rather than to investigate truth, which would have fastened the crimes he gives to Richard on the character of her grandfather, Henry the Seventh.

As a dramatic poet, Shakspeare's main object in the composition of Richard seems to be this:—to exhibit in the strongest colors the unlimited powers of stupendous intellect when united with stupendous courage. To this end he forms a monster who, to the pollution of every crime that can make man noxious to man and offensive to God, adds the most disgusting personal deformity, and yet renders him terribly great, and admirable and sublimely attractive, by the

Digitized by Google

mere force of valor, which nothing can dismay, and of intellect capacious of every thing. These are the fundamental parts of the composition which a true philosophic actor like Cooke will take for his guide; arising from them as corollaries the more minute considerations present themselves: among those are a continual, evident consciousness in Gloster of his own superior powers, and, arising from that again, the most ineffable contempt for the understanding of all other persons.

Notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's opinion to the contrary, it may be doubted whether in any of his works Shakspeare has evinced more consummate genius, more profound knowledge of the human heart, more invention in devising extraordinary yet natural conjunctures, or more dexterity in making them productive of after effect, than in this of Richard. May we not say too that in making, like another Prometheus, and animating with fire not stolen from heaven but borrowed from hell, this being of his own, of which there was no prototype in history or romance to guide him, he has displayed a spirit of prophecy? The time was, and that not long ago, when Shakspeare's Gloster was considered as a composition which not only never had, but could not in the nature of things have an exemplar: yet when we come to analyse that same composition, and compare its constituent parts article by article with those of the tyrant who now tramples Europe under foot, we shall not find one wanting in either that belongs not to the other, not even excepting the wonderful command of temper which, when it suits his purpose, Shakspeare's monster displays, but which, like that of our modern Gloster, was evidently not natural to him.

Gloster's first appearance is in the tower, whither he comes for the purpose of cutting off, as he avows, the captive king: "*My first step shall be on Henry's head.*" Mr. Cooke's face, person, deportment, and utterance of that fine soliloquy were all Richard, and his entrance was hailed with repeated volleys of plaudits. In soliloquy Cooke is allowed, even by his adversaries, to stand wholly unrivalled: he seems really alone; and if ever any actor better than all others conveyed the most perfect idea of self-conference, that actor is Cooke. Yet in this soliloquy he seemed to have fallen short of the expectation of the audience, to which, truly, so extravagantly high was it raised, no man that ever lived could possibly come up.

In this admirable speech Gloster gives a partial view of his

Digitized by Google

nature, and gains a sort of admiration by his total disregard of mere external personal beauty and ornament. This he evinces by the levity with which he treats his own manifold deformity, and his derision of the fripperies of "this piping time of peace."

> Instead of mounting barbed steeds,
> To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
> He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
> To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

Never were features and voice more happily associated than Mr. Cooke's for the production of that impression which Shakspeare meant to effect by this speech; and the very harshness of his voice contributed to the perfection of it, particularly in the lines

> Then, since this earth affords no joy
> But *to command, to check*, and *overbear* such
> As are of happier person than myself.

The next scene presents Gloster in the chamber with Henry; and here it was that the audience were first compelled to make an unanimous acknowledgment of the actor's superior powers. To those who had never before seen character delineated with all its adjuncts, or passion exhibited, not by mere verbal recital, but by its corporeal indications, the action of Cooke in this scene must have been an extraordinary—a novel spectacle. The matchless expression of his countenance, in which one might read impatience and conscious guilt with fury and hatred, rendered more terrible by occasional gleams of derision and contempt, while Henry accuses him of his barbarous crimes, so perfectly identified the monster intended by the poet, and rendered the whole soul of the tyrant so visible, that his perception must be dull indeed who could not understand the character from the actor's looks alone; yet were these not more expressive or appropriate than his actions. His fiddling with his sword, the quivering of his lip and under jaw, the convulsive starting of his muscles, the clawing with his fingers, and the universal agitation produced throughout his whole frame by the violence of his passion, bid defiance to every attempt at description. His impatience and the fellness of his purpose were marked with more singular emphasis by his play with his sword, than by any other single circumstance: instead of putting his right hand to it every now and then as others do, he fiddled with the hilt with his left, his thumb beating upon it with convulsive agitation.

Digitized by Google

That profound philosopher, Dr. Johnson, has somewhere laid it down as a moral postulate, that to be at once merry and malicious is an indication of the most consummate badness of heart. In his composition of Gloster Shakspeare has taken care not to omit this ingredient. Not merely insensible to feeling and inaccessible to remorse, he is sportive in the very act of perpetrating murder, and seems to laugh in triumph at his own villanies. Having killed the good king he derides him, and treats him, even in death, with bitter, sneering irony.

> What!—Will th' aspiring blood of Lancaster
> Sink in the ground?——I thought it would have mounted.
> See how my sword weeps for the poor king's death!

In these cruel effusions, and indeed through the whole of the speech, the concomitant looks, action and expression of Cooke were inimitably great, striking and characteristic.

In the whole of that speech Mr. Cooke, whose felicity in soliloquy is unequivocally acknowledged, seemed not to strike some of the audience so forcibly as might have been expected. The colloquial familiarity of his speaking was *caviere* to the multitude. It had too much nature in it, and too little molasses.

Habituated to consider his deformity as an exclusion from the pale of human nature, Gloster treats all others as if they were beings of a different species. Varying his means according to the character of each, he, by persuasion, flattery, or terror, makes them the instruments of his policy, and, even while he flatters, despises them. From the constant exercise of dissimulation, and the natural versatility of his genius, he derives such a facility in feigning, that he can assume as many shapes as Proteus. In all these changes, to let the real man be a little seen, and, through the assumed form, to disclose the internal workings of Richard's heart, so as to render them intelligible to his auditors, requires in an actor, not only the most nice intellectual discrimination, but a rare flexibility of feature and the most powerful physiognomical expression. Naturally fierce and irascible, Gloster can subdue his passion when necessary: but the struggle within is violent. To mark this to the eyes of the audience, and yet to preserve the necessary dissimulation, requires powers such as few actors have ever possessed, even in a limited measure, none that we have ever seen in a degree at all equal to Cooke. How exquisitely fine, how minutely characteristic,

Digitized by Google

was his transition in the first scene of the second act! He is deliberating with himself in soliloquy on lady Anne's disinclination to see him, and his own personal unfitness for love, when a lieutenant entering hastily addresses him

Lieut. My lord, I beg your grace——

Too intent upon the subject of his contemplation to brook interruption, he takes fire,

Glost. Begone, fellow! I'm not at leisure.
Lieut. My lord, the king your brother's taken ill.

No sooner does this intelligence reach his ear than his whole frame and face undergo an instantaneous change. Every symptom of brutal roughness and overbearing ferocity is dismissed from his countenance, and succeeded by a mixed expression of diabolical transport and fawning kindness, while bending to the lieutenant he replies in a softened, friendly tone of voice,

I'll wait on him: leave me—*friend!*

nor was this more impressive than the wild rapture which beamed from his eyes when, the lieutenant being gone, he exclaimed

Ha! Edward taken ill!

or the murderous spirit that broke forth in the tone of voice, the utterance, and the savage look, with which he said

Would he were wasted, marrow—bones—and all.

As the celebrated courtship scene with lady Anne is perhaps the boldest in conception, the most difficult to reconcile to reason, and yet the most successfully executed that ever entered the imagination of a poet, so we may venture to affirm that the performance of it by Cooke may be reckoned among the most masterly specimens of the histrionic art.

In contemplating this extraordinary scene, the first thing that strikes us is the boldness and unblushing effrontery of Gloster, in daring, under such circumstances, to address or even to entertain a hope of winning her. Never sure was there a conjuncture of such difficulty propounded; and, after wondering how Gloster could so much as imagine it possible, we are at a loss to conceive by what practicable means he can hope to accomplish it. For the solution of this doubt we must, in the first instance, resort to Richard's opinion of

Digitized by Google

lady Anne, and to her character as he gradually develops it. That he is perfectly aware of all the difficulties that oppose him, we have from his own mouth:

> Why Love forswore me in my mother's womb,
> And, that I should not deal in his soft laws,
> He did corrupt frail Nature with a bribe
> To shrink my arm up like a wither'd plant;
> To heap an envious mountain on my back,
> Where sits deformity to mock my body;
> To shape my legs of an unequal size;
> To disproportion me in every part.
> And am I then a thing to be beloved?
> Oh monstrous thought! more vain than my ambition.

His hardihood here therefore appears great; but is swelled to absolute enormity when the time, the place and the manner of addressing her are considered. He takes her at the funeral of king Henry, whom he had murdered, and at the very moment when she is pouring forth the most bitter execrations on the murderer. Nay more, he aggravates his offences by stopping the procession and compelling the bearers to lay down the corpse.

Gloster founds his hopes of success on two separate points—on his own vast abilities and hypocrisy, and the weakness and passions of lady Anne. The power of the former he knows and relies on; the latter he knows and despises.

> But I've a tongue shall wheedle with the devil.
> Why, I can smile and smile and murder when I smile,
> And cry content to that which grieves my heart,
> And wet my cheek with artificial tears,
> And suit my face to all occasions.

And when, unseen by her, he hears her pour forth a string of curses not only on himself as a murderer of her husband, but on his wife if he have any:

> Accursed the head that had the heart to do it;
> If ever he have wife, let her be made
> More miserable by the life of him
> Than I now by Edward's death.

what can show his contempt for her heart and understanding more than his derisive, confident side-speech,

> Poor girl! what pains she takes to curse herself!

Digitized by Google

That his plan in outraging the funeral is evidently to increase her anger, in order that, by her violence, she may at once exhaust her rage and charges against him, appears from his side-speech:

> First, *let her sorrows take some vent*—stand here!
> *I'll take her passion in its waine*, and turn this
> Storm of grief to gentle drops of pity
> For his repentant murderer.

Having, by a direct confession of his offences, provoked her to exhaust her rage, he turns upon her with the whole artillery of his most artful flattery, and makes even the murder of her husband administer to the gratification of her vanity.

> Your beauty was the cause of that effect;
> Your beauty! that did haunt me in my sleep
> To undertake the death of all the world,
> So I might live one hour in that soft bosom.

Again

> Fair creature, he that kill'd thy husband,
> Did it to help thee to a better husband.

Again

> Nay do not pause, for I did kill king Henry,
> But 'twas thy wondrous beauty did provoke me;
> Or now despatch—'twas I that stabb'd your husband—
> But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

This shameless avowal of his enormities, seasoned as they are with rank flattery on the score of her beauty, impresses her with an idea of his candour, and when he has thus soothed her, and in some measure dispelled her distrust of him, he cunningly urges his passion, and obtains an indirect compliance with his suit.

From the structure of this scene it is evident that it not only affords scope for, but imperiously demands, the most capital acting, and this it received from Mr. Cooke, the matchless significance of whose countenance gave full effect to every line he uttered, and made the whole an interesting and instructive commentary on female feebleness, and the danger of vanity to the sex.

The parts of the scene in which the powers of this great actor appeared most prominent were, first, his injunction to the bearers of Henry's body to lay it down

> Advance thy halbert—higher than my breast.

secondly, the sneering archness of his look and voice, when, on lady Anne having panegyrized the deceased king,

Digitized by Google

Oh! he was gentle, loving, mild and virtuous;
But he's in heaven, where thou canst never come;

he replies,

Was I not kind to send him thither?
He was much fitter for that place than earth.

The hypocritical pathos he threw into his voice and looks when he offers her his sword, and bids her hide it in his breast:

And let the *honest* soul out that adores thee;

and above all, the manner of his uttering the line

Why I can smile and smile, and murder when I smile,

and the three lines that follow it; which four lines were for the first time introduced into the part by Mr. Cooke himself, from the third part of Henry the Sixth. A judicious introduction, not only as they contain a forcible illustration of the character of Richard, but as they afford the actor a fine scope for exhibiting his powers. Never were words delivered with more perfect felicity, or greater effect, than these by Mr. Cooke, who, while uttering them, seemed to luxuriate with diabolical delight in the consciousness of his possessing such terrible powers for the perpetration of mischief. On the whole, this scene was one tissue, nearly uniform, of transcendent excellence.

No person on the stage seldomer subjects his judgment to impeachment in what is called the business of his part, than Mr. Cooke: but criticism would lose its character and privileges if it were to let a fault pass unnoticed, out of respect to the authority or the talents of any actor, and is here compelled to censure this gentleman's manner of joining the royal family when they are assembled on the annunciation of king Edward's death. Gloster, on entering, is made by the poet to come in sneering at their sorrow:

Why ay! *these tears look well*—sorrow's the mode,
And every one at court must wear it now.

This is to himself, or, as the books have it, *aside:* yet Mr. Cooke speaks it from behind the rest, so that it must necessarily reach the ears of the court before it can reach the audience. This must defeat the real meaning of the thing as respects the illusion necessary to be preserved. It is true that the printed play has it "*enter Gloster behind;*" but that may have originated in accident, and certainly

Digitized by Google

ought not to be allowed to militate against plain common sense, which dictates that Gloster should speak those words so as not to be heard by the court. We remember to have seen it ordered differently.—Throughout the whole scene, however, as well as in that which followed it, Cooke was as very a Gloster as Shakspeare could have wished an actor to be, for the illustration of his writings. One part was singularly great: we mean his by-play, while Buckingham relates what passed between him and the citizens on the subject of raising Gloster to the throne and putting aside the children. But that which deserves most praise was the soliloquy that concludes the second act. We cannot refrain from again adverting to the peculiar excellence of this great performer in soliloquies. By most other actors they seem to be addressed to the audience, like a prologue or epilogue. Cooke's are perfectly and evidently self-conferences; the private effusion in words of his internal thoughts and emotions. That to which we now allude is one of the most difficult in the world.

> Let me see—
> The prince will soon be here——let him!—the crown!
> Oh yes, he shall have twenty—globes and sceptres too!
> New ones made to play withal—but no coronation—
> No, nor any court flies about him;—no kinsmen.—
> Hold ye!—Where shall he keep his court?—The tower?
> Ay——the tower.

Nothing could be more perfect than his management of these lines. He was in every thing alone. He deliberated;—the pauses between the broken sentences were filled up by the eloquence of his looks. After putting to himself the questions, "where shall he keep his court?—the tower?" his face exhibited a visible debate; and again seemed to settle the matter definitively when he said "Ay!—the tower;" during which whole time not so much as a side glance at the audience escaped him.

Proceeding forward with Mr. Cooke in the character of Gloster, the most striking scene that calls for notice is that with the mayor and citizens, in which the deep dissimulation of the character was so happily hit off, that the spectators could not at all wonder at the mayor's being imposed upon. To speak less generally,—in his feigned apprehension that the city magistrate has come to rebuke him for some supposed offence,

> Now do I fear I've done some strange offence,
> That looks ungracious in the city's eye,

Digitized by Google

the apparent sincerity expressed in his tone and humble looks was highly characteristic of the crookback; and again, when they urge him to take upon himself the sceptred office, not as protector, but as king, and he affects to rebuke them:

> I cannot tell, if to depart in silence,
> Or bitterly to speak in your reproof,
> Fits best with my degree, or your condition,

there was an apparent earnestness approaching to that lofty severity with which it was really his duty to have treated their proposal. This was masterly: this showed the actor of genius who had investigated his character with the eye of a philosopher. But no sooner has he impressed the magistrates with the persuasion that he condemns their conduct, and has thereby a little alarmed them, than Cooke changes his key, softens the tone of his voice, and relieves them by clothing his seeming refusal in expressions of kindness and good will.

> Therefore, to speak in just refusal of your suit,
> And then in speaking *not to check my* FRIENDS,
> Definitively thus I answer you.

There was in all this a lucid, delicate discrimination, which, in a long life of theatrical pursuit, we cannot remember to have, in a single instance, seen equalled. More striking passages, unquestionably, there were even in this scene, but not one of such exquisite delicacy and taste. More striking, for instance,—indeed much more striking,—was his transition from pious humility when, as the mayor and citizens are leaving him, he says

> My loving friends farewel;
> I must unto my HOLY WORK again,

to the exultation and hellish transport that swelled his bosom when they had gone. His whole frame seemed to swell as if to bursting; his utterance seemed to be smothered with joy; his face was a living picture of damned ambition wild with gratification: and when, at length, after a pause in which his soul seemed to be convulsed with internal enjoyment, he dashed the prayer book from his hand, and exclaimed

> Why now my golden dream is out!

the power of the superior actor was felt and loudly acknowledged; nor was there ever unanimity more perfect than in the applause lavished upon him in this part.

Digitized by Google

By a gradation conformable to nature, Richard, being king, becomes if possible more wicked, and is much less circumspect or cautious than when duke of Gloster. He now lays aside his hypocritical sanctity and his feigned deference and respect for his agents, and he soon makes even Buckingham feel how completely he had cajoled him. He proposes at the last to murder the two young princes, his nephews, and on Buckingham's hesitating, throws off all disguise, and resolves to hold no measures with him. Here the actor illustrated the author with astonishing effect. Even those who were least disposed to do justice to Mr. Cooke (and some such there were) were constrained to speak in raptures of his performance of that part of the second scene and fourth act, in which he breaks definitively with Buckingham. The look of satanic malice and derision which in turning from Catesby he cast at Buckingham, and the discriminating tones in which he uttered his last words to him, were astonishingly great. Yielding to the impetuosity of his furious temper, he burst out like a volcano in the words

I'm busy——thou troublest me!

and then resuming his temper, as though he reflected how much more poignantly afflictive to the human heart contempt is than anger, and thought Buckingham beneath his indignation, Cooke sunk his voice,—and changing his features from a look of furious passion, which would not discredit Moloch himself, to one of those malignant sneers which, when he chooses to assume them, distinguish his physiognomy from all others existing, he said in a low cutting voice, "*I'm not in the vein.*"—This passage deserves praise beyond all the efforts of panegyric.

We are now to view Gloster's character in a new aspect, and to consider how Cooke supported him in it. Having given his signet to Tirrell with instructions to murder the children in the tower, we find him waiting impatiently for the return of his bloody agent, and, for the first time, reflecting with strong symptoms of conscientious anguish on his enormities and on the consequences likely to follow them.

Would it were done!
There is a busy something here,
That foolish custom has made terrible
To the intent of evil deeds! and nature too,
As if she knew me womanish and weak,

Digitized by Google

Tugs at my heartstrings with complaining cries,
To talk me from my purpose—
And then the thought of what men's tongues will say
Of what their hearts must think;
To have no creature love me living, nor
My memory when dead.
Shall future ages, when these children's tale
Is told, drop tears in pity of their hapless fate;
And read, with detestation, the misdeeds of Gloster,
The crook-back'd tyrant, cruel, barbarous,
And bloody? Will they not say too
That to possess the crown, nor laws divine
Nor human stopt my way?

If Mr. Cooke displayed unequalled powers of expressing the more malignant feelings, derision, sarcasm, sneering and contempt, in the former parts, he showed himself in this, a powerful agitator of the heart in the softer feelings, and evinced masterly skill and force of expression in the pathetic. They who, after hearing these lines thrilled through the heart by Cooke, can persist in denying the excellence of his voice, must have made up their *doctrine* of voices upon models so very rare that we know not where to look for them. In these lines his undertones were beautiful and penetrating, and the whole an inimitable specimen of the pathetic: nor did it lose any thing by his transition to a higher key, when shaking off his conscientious feelings at the words

That to possess the crown, nor laws divine
Nor human stopt my way,

he triumphantly exclaimed

Why let them say it!
They can't but say I *had* the crown;
I was not FOOL as well as VILLAIN.

Through all the hurried business of the last part of the fourth act, Mr. Cooke bustled away pretty much as other great actors do. Here and there were brilliant scintillations; but nothing, nor does the character afford any, worthy of particular observation.

In the fifth act his mistrust of lord Stanley's fidelity, and his consequent indignation, half smothered and mixed up with irony, was happily expressed: nor ever did an actor give greater force to so many words than he to "*Well, as you guess?*"—This act is so stuffed up with military bustle, which to the judicious eye more

Digitized by Google

often appears ludicrous than pleasing on the stage, that we should think it a waste of words to go through it in detail. Speaking generally, Cooke's worst parts of Richard are in this act, and so we think are some of his best. Admiring him much more than any living actor, we think he falls short in picturing the hero, and gives rather an inadequate idea of military force and grandeur. Since we first saw him (several years ago) his voice has been a little shaken, and the roaring of Richard we never liked even from Mossop. Yet in several parts of that very roaring, Cooke showed his usual powers of discrimination. In the lines

> Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head,
> Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood!

which other actors address to the same quarter as if it were all directed to the archers, Cooke addressed, the first line to one side—the second, to the other, to show that he spoke to two separate bodies—the archers and the cavalry. And again in that speech—

> What ho! young Richmond, ho! 'tis Richard calls!
> I hate thee, Harry, for thy blood of Lancaster:
> Now, if thou dost not hide thee from my sword,
> Now, while the angry trumpet sounds alarms,
> And dying groans transpierce the wounded air,
> Richmond I say come forth, and singly face me!
> Richard is hoarse with daring thee to arms—

his separation (contrary to the practice of other Richards) of the last line from the rest of the speech, and his, after a short pause, uttering it in a lowered tone, evinced the supremacy of his discriminating judgment, even in minor passages, and produced a beautiful effect.

The scene in which Mr. Cooke drops farthest behind his great rivals in Richard, is the tent scene, when, terrified by the ghosts, he springs up from the couch. We have thought it rather short of that of Mr. Kemble, and many degrees inferior to Henderson's, who in this part was as much greater, as Cooke is greater than all others in the meditation scene the night before the battle;—a scene, in which this wonderful actor has established his claim to the character of THE Richard far, far beyond the rivalship of any performer living. Doubt—confidence—apprehension—disregard—defiance—and yet misgiving of the event of the next day, are successively displayed and sent home to every eye and heart by his restlessness, and

Digitized by Google

walking backwards and forwards,—by his sticking the point of his sword in the ground, and then recovering and flourishing it,—by his sighing and silent attempts to speak,—by his unequalled by-play, and by the matchless expression of his countenance, so obvious, so intelligible, so irresistibly eloquent, that no capacity however dull can fail to understand, no heart however obtuse can help to feel it; and his last words "GOOD NIGHT," surpassed the whole.

In the act of dying, Cooke may truly say in the words of Richard "I am myself alone!"—It is remarkable of this extraordinary man, that in playing a character frequently, he will perform each time differently from the rest, and yet all so well that it would almost amount to presumption to affirm which was best, because, play it in what style he will, he never, for a moment, loses sight of the character. One time in the dying Richard he makes an ineffectual effort to rise, and failing in it dashes away his sword in despair; another time he drops his sword, and, in making a vain effort to recover, falls again; both equally characteristic of the intrepid furious Richard. But that which gives the finishing stroke to the picture is the look which, raising himself on his elbow, he darts at Richmond. It was terrible, it had soul in it; it looked a testamentary curse, and made the death exactly correspondent to the life and living character of the monster Richard.

Many people were surprised at Cooke's delineation of Richard, because they could not possibly understand the application of acting, whether good or bad, to a character they did not know: and because they had never before seen any thing like it, they flattered themselves it could not possibly be right. They no doubt had frequently heard good declamation, recitation and ranting; but when before and where had they ever seen a part perfectly acted? What actor had they ever seen before Cooke exhibit the passions as they appear disclosed by their various effects upon the material frame?—Cooke has studied MAN in all his classes, and has caught from his observation every diversity of bodily symptom, by which the passions indicate their dominion over the human heart. These he displays in his face in general—his eyes, nose and lips, his chin, his brow—over which, as well as over the muscles of his neck, he has got such perfect power that they are the instant and faithful servitors of his thoughts and feelings. Nor is his expression confined to his physiognomy alone: his shoulders, arms, hands, nay his very fingers speak, in a way which shows that, in addition to his mighty genius, he has

Digitized by Google

called no common industry to his aid, and has hunted the passions through all the windings of their operation on our CLAY, not merely to the recesses of the human heart, but through every muscle, and to the very ends of the fingers.—With the beating of his left thumb upon the hilt of his sword he did more to picture the perturbation and rage of Richard than ordinary actors do with the whole exertion of their aggregate powers.

One of the characteristics of Richard is conscious superiority of talents and consequent scorn for all other men. Except when he is flattering or making use of them as agents, Cooke, in Richard, rarely faces the other persons of the scene: his back is generally turned or half turned upon them; and if he condescends to look at them, it is to read their intentions in their faces, to cut them with a contemptuous sneer, or to knock them down with a terrible frown. Nor while they are speaking is he idle; but with his countenance and by-play tells plainly the separate effect of every line they utter upon him, while at the same time he appears so rapt up in his selfish purposes, that he seems in reality to confer only with himself. We could not help smiling at some observations which were made the first night upon his acting. What does he do that for? said one—when Cooke was in dumbshow by-play speaking to the young prince. Another asked why he bit his lips. We wished at the moment to have the book in our hands to show him where Shakspeare himself marks it as a habit of Richard when angry. Catesby says "The king is angry, see he gnaws his lips." Yet this, and actions equally correct and characteristic, we heard censured as grimace. Mr. COOKE's Gloster has not the Lion-like spirit and stately majesty of Mossop; nor the princely port of Kemble, who decorates "*the bloody and devouring boar*" of the fifteenth century with all the artificial graces of the modern courtier: but it was truly Shakspearean. Cooke is too clear in his conception to associate the manners and deportment of one age with the argument and dress of another; his Richard, therefore, is marked with the blunt, uncouth stateliness, and the harsh and brutal pride that may be supposed to have belonged to a ferocious prince of four centuries ago.

His voice too was censured. Brains may be dispensed with, and therefore are not always looked for; but those who have ears may be expected to hear. Is it a thing of absolute necessity, that any character must have a particular kind of voice? If it be, we should feel obliged

Digitized by Google

to some genius to make a scale for the various degrees of voice according to his notions, and to appropriate them to their proper characters. It is to be apprehended that the human voice is not extensive enough to mark all the distinctions from the sovereign tyrant to the petitioning beggar. If we put a sweep chimney at No. I., what Number shall we find for Bonaparte? Imagination and language united are incompetent to find words to express such absurdity. But what is the truth of Mr. Cooke's voice? It is harsh, says one. So it is, at times; and so it should be, because, in nature, the human voice is sometimes harsh, and harshness is fit for some characters—Richard being one of them. But is it nothing more? Has it not great power and compass? Has it not some of the finest undertones? Has it not brilliant and piercing expression? Above all, has it not the very first requisite of a good voice, clear distinct articulation?—We say it has all these. His soliloquy while the murder of the children is perpetrating, and his underspeaking in every place, disclosed as perfect harmony—not whining—but manly harmony as the most fastidious ear could wish to drink in. And for clear articulation we need only instance his delivery of the first speech in the fifth scene of the fifth act. Mr. Cooke was seated in his tent at the very back of the stage, where other actors can scarcely make their voices audible. From that place he (without elevating his voice) spoke to be so distinctly *heard*, that each syllable forcibly beat, as we are informed, upon the drum of every ear in the gallery. The whispers of Cooke are more audible than the roaring of others.

The leading properties of Mr. Cooke, as an actor, are evidently these: a genius active and capacious, versatile and penetrating; a shrewd discernment; spirits lively and strong; animation which no exercise can exhaust; a judgment practised and correct; a luminous and exact discrimination, and a perfect, comprehensive knowledge of his business;—not the common *by-rote* knowledge of ordinary stage drudges, but the scientific, profound knowledge of a philosophic actor. To give effect to these intellectual endowments, nature has bestowed upon him, besides an excellent voice, a stout, manly person, and features full of mind and expression, bold, strong, of matchless flexibility, fitted for the display of most passions; but chiefly for those of contempt, sarcasm, scorn and overbearing pride.

In tragedy the American stage was, before the arrival of Cooke, pretty much in the state of the British at the time Garrick made

Digitized by Google

his first appearance, as it is described by Murphy in his life of that great actor. "Declamation roared in a most unnatural strain; "rant was passion; whining was love. Garrick saw that nature "was banished from the theatre; but he flattered himself that he "should be able to introduce a better taste, and succeed by the "TRUTH OF IMITATION.—He was frightened by the difficulties "that stood in his way. A new school of acting was to be estab- "lished, and the attempt, he was aware, would be called in- "novation. He shrunk back, not being sure of his own powers; "but the impulse of nature was not to be resisted. His genius "drove him on."

What Garrick said to Murphy of Doctor Johnson's tragedy of Irene as compared with the tragedies of Shakspeare, may be applied with some truth to the difference between other actors and Cooke, "Declamation roars, while passion sleeps; but Shakspeare dipped his pen in the heart."

Among all the men of learning, of judgment, and of taste uncorrupted by prejudice or vain affectation, in Philadelphia, there is but one opinion, and that is fixed and unalterable, because founded in truth—viz. that Mr. Cooke has, *for the first time*, let the people of America into that which was before a secret to them—what true acting is. That hitherto declamation has roared while passion slept: but that Cooke is the true disciple of the bard who dipped his pen in the heart.

The observations of a number of ignorant persons on this actor have occasioned great merriment. Some wags are ill natured enough to mix with circles of the greasy caps,* not only to hear their *luminous* criticisms, but to encourage them to expose their folly. In this way it has actually from time to time happened that every actor of our stage, not merely Mr. Cooper, Mr. Fennell and Mr. Wood, but all others in descent down to the very lowest, has had his smug friends to prefer him to Mr. Cooke; and these, by a perversion of judgment peculiar to presumptuous ignorance, seem intent upon establishing their point in proportion to the incapacity of their particular favourite. We should be sorry to extend derision or circulate the laugh at the expense of those victims of foolish friendship, else we could mention persons who have been

* They threw up their greasy caps, says Coriolanus of the mob, as if they would hang them on the horns of the moon.

Digitized by Google

set up as competitors of Mr. Cooke, some whose names can scarcely be mentioned without exciting a smile from the judicious; and some who, even as makeshifts, are by all people of taste considered dead burdens to the scenes they jumble through.

> While folly o'er the stage her standard bore,
> And common sense stood frighted at the door.

These are some of what Sir Fretful Plagiary calls your *damned* good friends, who, to show their own cleverness, strip the objects of their admiration and expose them, in their shivering nakedness, to the mortifying blasts of public contempt.

We are sorry to be compelled to censure such an actor, and above all in a point in which it would be scarcely pardonable for him to go astray if he thought of it. We mean his incorrect pronunciation of certain words: for instance, "*Either*," which he pronounced as if it were spelled *Ythor* instead of *eether; Guild*hall, which he pronounced as if sounded like *guile* instead of *Geeldhall;* and *say*crifice which he ought to know is by all gentlemen pronounced *sak*rifice. He pronounces too the final *s* in words ending with *ss* much more hard than in general elegant speakers do; we own it astonished us to hear Mr. Cooke give the French termination to the words "pursuivant" and "odour." These have long been denizened as English words. As to the pronunciation of the letter *R*, which has been so ridiculously censured, we think it not merely correct, but beautiful, as stamping the character of a necessary letter which feebleness and vanity are gradually melting down to nothing.

Those who cannot be satisfied with less than unmixed *perfection*, we recommend it to seek, in other actors, that which they certainly will not find in Mr. Cooke. But for those who can, with us, be contented with the greatest number of excellences, alloyed by the fewest faults, we hazard nothing in recommending Mr. Cooke in preference to all actors now living.

We are free to confess our incapacity to point out half the beauties of this actor, who has from the first time we saw him in London in the year 1800, up to the present moment, been invariably the object of our unfeigned admiration. We have done our best however; and with equal candor have stated his blemishes.—But what are they after all? Motes in the blaze of the sun: indeed such as could not be discerned in any but an object the most bright and luminous.

Digitized by Google

THE

MIRROR OF TASTE

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

VOLUME III.] APRIL, 1811. [NUMBER IV.

HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 139.]

IT was not till the beginning of the seventeenth century that the dramatic genius of France was warmed into full and exuberant production by the sun of its poetical hemisphere. At that era, the great luminary, CORNEILLE, rose above the clouded horizon, surrounded by a host of satellites, his precursors, his contemporaries, and his followers in the career of glory.—Nature, as if she were disposed to atone to France for her former parsimony, poured upon that country, in one half century, a greater number of eminent dramatic poets than any other country could boast the possession of in a much longer period. High raised, in proud preeminence above the rest, stood PETER CORNEILLE, who has always held, and in all likelihood will for ever hold, in that country, the same superiority that Shakspeare holds in Great Britain. This great man was born at Rouen, in Normandy, in the year 1606. He was brought up to the bar, which he abandoned, either as unpleasing to his taste or unsuitable to his talents. At the time of his birth DESMARETS and CHAPELAIN were eleven years each, and COLLETET

Digitized by Google

was in his eighth year; Boisrobert was fourteen years of age; the renowned George Scudery, of whom mention has already been made as the panegyrist of Hardy, and the no less celebrated Francis Tristan, surnamed "The Hermit," were each in the fifth year of their age; Mairet was two years of age; and Du Ryer one. On the other hand, speaking in chronological order of their births, Corneille was followed in three years after by Rotrou. Thus we see that great luminary accompanied, as he rose to his meridian height, by a constellation of inferior yet brilliant planets, who moved in various orbits around him. As the history of this era contains circumstances of a singular nature, it may be expedient to give a short sketch of the life and character of each of those persons.

Francois le Metel de Boisrobert was, as well as Corneille, a Norman by birth, being born at Caen. At an early age he was distinguished for the brilliance of his wit, the facetiousness of his humour, and the vivid flashes of a lively sportive fancy. These happy mental endowments, aided by a comprehensive, vigorous and retentive memory, and enriched not only by classical erudition but by all the treasures of Boccace and the Florentine school, rendered his conversation singularly attractive, and raised him to the favour of cardinal Richelieu, then prime minister of France.

Desmarets was a man of some wit; and he too enjoyed the favour of Richelieu, which he is said to have acquired more by cunning and servility than by any superiority of talents: he published several dramas, none of which were very remarkable for any thing but their being supposed to be in part written by the cardinal, who, in requital for the pleasure of this poetical copartnership, conferred on Desmarets several lucrative offices in the state; while Chapelain, whose genius fell short of that of Desmarets, was the great man's drudge of all works—a kind of common bail who stood the brunt of those things which the others thought disgraceful to them, and fathered all the contemptible passages in the writings of the proud, mean cardinal.

Colletet was a counsellor, and a member of the French academy, who also enjoyed the patronage of Richelieu; but, wanting the cunning of Desmarets, died in such poverty that he left not wherewith to bury him when he died.

Scudery was descended of a noble family. He too was a Norman, being born at Havre de Grace in 1601. He served with honour

Digitized by Google

in the army, in which he obtained high rank, and was admitted of the French academy.

Tristan was born in the province of Le Manche in the year 1601. His fortunes, like his descent, were singular and marked with the stamp of romance. Lineally descended from the celebrated *Pierre Le Hermite*, or Peter the Hermit, the original author of the crusades, whether it lurked in his blood or was derived from a constant retrospection of his ancestor's example, he seems to have been as chivalrous and as little fitted for the world, as the pious and sanguinary Peter himself: for being placed near the person of the Marquis de Verneuil, a natural son of Henry the Fourth, he quarrelled with an officer, fought and killed him. To save himself from the ignominious death, which would have inevitably followed the perpetration of *honourable* murder, he fled to England, and there he imbibed, for the first time, a taste for literature and poetry. Through the interest of Marshal de Heunieres, he obtained a full pardon from Lewis the Thirteenth; and returning to Paris, was taken into the service, as one of the gentlemen in ordinary, of the celebrated Gaston de Orleans, the king's brother. But the emoluments of his office, together with all that he could glean from his pen, as a poet, were very inadequate to the expenditure of a man devoted to women and gambling. His merit as a writer was very considerable. As a dramatic poet he very much excelled Scudery. Eight dramas are known to be his, and two more are ascribed, but with less certainty, to his pen. His tragedy of Mariamne has great merit and, as well as some other pieces of his composition, has been made use of advantageously by after writers of more celebrity.

It has been said, and not without reason, that a remarkable congeniality of character, as well as similarity of fortune and of fate, subsists between Tristan and our ill-starred poet, Savage, whose life by Dr. Johnson may be ranked among the very highest specimens of biographical composition of this or indeed of any age or country. Endowed with nearly equal genius, and oppressed with equal miseries arising from similar causes, he lived long in poverty and died in disgrace. Like Savage, he abused fine talents, and frustrated every effort to save him; trifled with his character; neglected, irritated, or tired out his friends, till the most grinding indigence reduced him to hunger and to rags; being reduced, as Boileau informs us, to go without a shirt in summer, and in winter to be destitute of a coat. And as Savage, in his admirable

Digitized by Google

poem of "The Bastard," has left to the world a detail of his low condition, so Tristan has left an account of many of the leading circumstances of his turbulent and eventful life in a romance intitled "The Disgraced Page."

It was on the writings of Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, who had been some time dead when Tristan arrived in England, that this poet formed his dramatic taste. With Massinger too, then living, he enriched his mind. This is an incontestable proof not only of the priority of England to France in the perfecting of their respective dramas, but of the improvement which the latter derived from the former: for it is evident, that at this precise era the productions of the French theatre, till then dull, frigid, and inanimate, began to catch a spark from the muse of fire of Shakspeare, and to glow with a fervour and a lustre reflected from the bard of Avon.

Mairet, who was born two years before and died two years after Corneille, was of high connexions, and was created a nobleman for the valour he displayed when serving under admiral Montmorency. Beside other works, he wrote twelve plays, most of which are tragicomedies, and very indecent; so much was it the fashion of the time to imitate the faults as well as to aspire to the excellencies of the British writers. Du Ryer was a writer of greater genius; but being much embarrassed in his circumstances, and wanting the splendid connexions by which, much more than by genius, the reputation of Mairet was kept alive, he never received justice, or even common fair play, till death rendered him insensible to all things of this earth. He wrote four and twenty pieces, of which some have extraordinary merit. One of his plays has received the concurrent eulogies of some of the greatest personages and most enlightened critics of Europe. *Alcione* is said by D'Aubigne to be replete with beauty and grandeur; Menage sets it down as a chef d'œuvre; and it so entirely attracted the admiration of Christina, Queen of Sweden, that she had it frequently read to her.

Lastly, and certainly nearest in merit to Corneille, of all the poets of that day, came Routrou, whose productions are thickly set with rich poetic beauties, and whose praise it is to have devoted his labours to the improvement of the drama, and to the rendering of tragedy more natural and at the same time more interesting. Whatever either faulty or inferior to the level of his genius appears in his writings, may be ascribed to haste: being devoted to the vice

Digitized by Google

of gambling, he was often hard set for means, and his overspurred muse had often to repair the breaches made in his affairs by the mischances of the gaming table. Tragicomedy being then the prevailing taste, (a taste imported from England) Rotrou, in common with all the dramatic poets of the day, had recourse to the Greek, Roman, Italian, Spanish and English dramatic poets for subjects—all of them originally taken from romance, and which, with their fantastic extravagancies, had more the semblance of knight errantry than of nature. He however did only as others did. Even Corneille was not wholly exempt from the same faults and errors; and there is reason to apprehend that if he had not suffered himself to be hurried along by the tide of the times and indulged too much in the extravagant taste then in fashion, Rotrou would have been but little inferior to his gigantic cotemporary Cornellle.

In the long history of human infirmity few spectacles are to be found which to the moral eye are more curious, or indeed much more contemptible, or mortifying to the pride of the species, than that which the intrigues of the cardinal Richelieu with his poetical dependents, to bolster up his literary fame and indulge his vanity, present. As such the history of this period of the French stage deserves particular attention, and more than ordinary care in the management of its details.

It would seem as if the same spirit of intrigue and turbulence, which actuated the cardinal in his capacity of a statesman, informed him in all the other departments of his life; and that the temper, which rendered him intolerant of peace in the former, made him incapable of rest in the latter. His munificence to institutions of learning and science, and his patronage of men of letters, would have immortalized him as the Mæcenas of his age and country, if the former were not tarnished by inordinate pride and ostentation, and the latter were not justly liable to the imputation of being founded in selfishness, and a puerile, pitiful ambition to obtain credit for works that did not belong to him, and to reduce those whom he patronized to the disgraceful condition of pandars to his vanity, his jealousy, and his revenge. With much of the ability and more of the ambition of a great man, but little of the virtues of a good one, Richelieu patronized the arts and sciences merely to have the reputation of being surrounded by men whose works and gratitude could confer upon him immortality. His natural vanity being inflamed by the adulation of dependent poets, he fondly

Digitized by Google

conceived that a pretty little talent for poetry, which he really possessed, raised him to a level with Corneille; he looked upon that great man as his rival, as his rival hated him, and absolutely suffered himself to be so far gone in fatuity as to be madly jealous of the celebrity of THE CID of that wonderful poet; in consequence of which he employed some of his literary hirelings to attack Corneille, and, by all practicable means, to depreciate his compositions.

The cardinal's private poetical cabal consisted of Routrou, Desmarets, Colletet, and Boisrobert. These four with Corneille helped the cardinal in the composition of some wretched pieces. It is generally thought most likely that he wrote them first himself, and that they were then revised and amended by the five poets, who underwent the disgrace of fathering the miserable things in order to shield the great statesman and divine from the scandal of being a dramatic poet. Of those pieces thus fathered to the public eye, by those writers, who went by the name of "The Five Poets," the names of three are particularly recorded as being the cardinal's, accompanied with some anecdotes well worth relating, as highly descriptive of the character of that extraordinary personage.

Being not only persuaded in his own mind of the excellence of a piece he had just composed, called *Europe*, but perfectly confident of its success, he resolved to have the opinion of the French academy to back his own. Of obtaining this he had little doubt, not only because he was assured of the merits of his composition, but because that academy was founded by himself, and was chiefly composed of his own creatures. He, therefore, ordered Boisrobert to lay it before that learned body; and, in his name, to desire they would peruse it and give their opinion of it, sincerely, and unqualified by flattery, and entirely apart from any partial consideration of their respect and personal feelings towards him: he added too, an injunction that they should freely and candidly correct any thing they found in it censurable by the rules of the stage or the general laws of poetry.

Flattered by the condescension of the cardinal—not a little elated with pride at the testimony to their merits contained in this unlimited privilege—and unwilling to neglect such an opportunity of showing their wisdom and authority, they sat down with the most perfect good will and appetite to the work of criticism; and without once giving themselves time to consult their own cunning or their patron's feelings, they so mangled the bantling of the cardinal's

Digitized by Google

brain, that, when it came back to him, a very small portion of it was legible, it was so mutilated and filled with blots. Like poor Sir John Suckling's stockings, it was so mended, patched, pieced, and darned, that very little of the original fabric remained to testify to the cardinal that it had once been his own.

The triumph of cutting up the cardinal being over, the confidence of Boisrobert began to flag as he returned to his eminences on his way he was troubled with doubts and misgivings of the prudence of the academy, and could not help lamenting that the very first act of sincerity to his grace of which they had been *guilty*, was likely to be attended with serious consequences. It was now however too late, and far out of his competence to correct it: he therefore, with every softening circumstance which caution and cunning could suggest, made his report to Richelieu, and at the same time presented to him his copy in its dismal state of mutilation.

The cardinal, though universally renowned, has been celebrated for nothing more than the equanimity and christian patience with which he could bear the disasters of his country, and stand unmoved under the severest shocks which the state and empire sustained under his warlike administration; but his country and the bantling of his brain were two different things, and very differently indeed affected him: he fairly sunk under the blow given to the latter, lost all patience, and with it all his prudence, and his comfort too; so tearing to pieces the copy in a paroxysm of rage and disappointment, he threw the fragments into the fireplace, and, groaning with despondency and grief, retired to his bed.

After he had lain for some time sadly ruminating on his misfortune, his temper settled down and his reason in some sort returned to its office. He began to suspect that he had been rather rash; and it afforded him a gleam of comfort to reflect that there had been no fire burning in the fireplace into which he had thrown his precious production. He, therefore, thought it best to make a virtue of necessity, and to save his dear offspring, disfigured as it was by the barbarous hands of the tasteless academical ruffians; so he sent for his secretary Cheret—ordered him carefully to collect all the fragments of paper in the chimney, sent him to the laundry for some starch, and, these being brought, sat up the whole night pasting and piecing the play till, just about day-break, he had it restored to an almost legible condition. That day he stood by while it was

Digitized by Google

recopied, and, as it was in the process of transcription, ordered the corrections of the academy to be altered, some few trivial ones excepted; which done, he sent the new copy back by Boisrobert to the academy, with a condescending intimation to them, that they might observe he had profited by their advice.——But that, as it was possible they might not be more infallible than him, he had not altogether abided by their alterations.

The academy were at first confounded; but Boisrobert, Desmarets and Colletet soon found means to convince them that they had been all wrong, that the cardinal was a better judge of his own play than all of them put together, or at least that, however judicious they might be as poets, they must have been silly politicians to find fault where they were expected to praise; wherefore they came to a resolution *nem. con.* to return the play to his eminence unaltered, and to accompany it with a reverential letter stating their approbation of the piece, professing the vast delight they felt in reperusing it, and assuring him of their confidence of its success before the public.

Another characteristic anecdote of the cardinal shows him in a still more ridiculous and contemptible view. He procured, at the expense of one hundred thousand crowns, a play of his, called *Mirame*, to be brought upon the stage. It failed of success on the first representation. He assisted, himself, in person at the performance, and was nearly frantic with despair when he found it rejected. Filled with rage, consternation and chagrin, he repaired to his palace and gave orders for Desmarets to attend him straight. Frightened to an agony at the thoughts of facing the cardinal alone, the unhappy poet brought along with him a friend of the name of *Petit*, a shrewd, cunning fellow, full of humour, and happy in a more than common share of impudence and presence of mind. The moment they entered the cardinal's closet, he abruptly exclaimed to them—"What think you now? Will the French people, do you think, ever have any taste? Could you have believed it possible? Do you know, they were not delighted with my *Mirame*?"—Petit, who saw that Desmarets was overwhelmed with confusion, and thought that he himself knew better how to humour the cardinal, without hesitation replied, "I assure you, monseigneur, it was not the fault of the play, which is really admirable;—it was entirely the fault of the actors. Your eminence cannot but have perceived that they were not only imperfect in their parts but that they were

Digitized by Google

all beastly drunk."—"Yes, yes," said the cardinal, "I could perceive it; it was plain enough:—well! we shall see what is to be done on the next representation." The part they had to perform was now plain enough to the two parasites. They contrived to select and pack an audience, all of whom were admitted gratis, and some were even paid for attending. Miserable weakness!—stupid infatuation! deplorable inconsistency!—That a man whose counsels were to guide and govern a mighty empire, and to whose will it was competent to agitate and shake the whole continent of Europe, should be the dupe of such mean, such pilfering propensities, and so blinded by his passions as not to see that his petty artifices were transparent, and that such creatures as those who stooped to be his agents were incapable of fidelity.

Paul Pellison Fontanier, the historian of Lewis the Fourteenth, in his history of the French academy, states with pointed circumstantiality, that the great Richelieu enjoyed the plaudits of this hired audience with as enthusiastic delight as if it were the real voluntary applause of an impartial, unhired audience; that in order to encourage and increase the applause, and bring it to bear more directly upon him personally, he constantly showed himself to the audience; that he frequently commanded silence, in order that the particular passages, which he most affected, might be more distinctly heard, and better attended to, and that he even went so far as sometimes to applaud the piece himself, in order to induce the crowd to applaud also.

And now for a specimen of what the pandars of such men may expect from their principals!—In his zeal to accomplish his object for the cardinal, and the hurry and bustle attending the packing of the house, poor Boisrobert, not being able to distinguish his recruits, or to discriminate between their characters, unfortunately introduced some women of tainted reputation into the same box with the Dutchess of Aiguillon, who, upon being informed of the very bad character of the ladies who had been thus set cheek by jowl with her in public, was so exceedingly enraged that she insisted on Richelieu's discarding the unhappy offender. The cardinal was mean and ungrateful enough to comply, and poor Boisrobert was banished. The academy however acted, upon the occasion, with a spirit which may be considered as in some sort atoning for their abject submission in the affair of the altered play of *Europe*: for

Digitized by Google

knowing how very little cause the cardinal had to be displeased with Boisrobert, they demanded his recal, which nevertheless was delayed, till Richelieu, being taken ill with chagrin and mortification at the issue of that shameful affair, sent to his physician for a recipe; when *Monseigneur le Medicin*, who probably had his cue, as well as fee from his eminence, answered that the best physic would be the presence of Boisrobert; on which authority the discarded favourite was recalled.

The cardinal brought forth a comedy called *The Tuilleries*, which he caused to be performed at his own palace, attending the disposition and arrangement of the scenes, with all the industry and earnestness of the manager of a strolling company. Corneille was desirous to make an alteration in one of the acts, and felt rather embarrassed upon the occasion, fearing to offend his eminence on the one hand, and on the other being averse to let the piece go into the world with an absurdity on the face of it, which could not fail to excite merriment at the expense either of the cardinal or his stalking horses, the five poets; but when, with some difficulty, he proposed it, the great man replied, "*Il falloit avoir un esprit de fuite*," or in plain English, that he must take care and be very accommodating!

The stage history of all the nations of the earth presents nothing that can maintain a competition in weakness, absurdity, and monstrous taste with the writings and conduct of Richelieu as a dramatist. For the comedy of The Tuilleries he wrote a prologue, which, to the public eye, he saddled for a time on his packhorse Chapelain. In this curious composition he fulsomely praised in detail all his authors, who were placed, for the purpose of receiving this contemptible incense, in conspicuous situations among the audience. When the comedy was fairly transcribed, Colletet was ordered by his eminence to read it to him. Colletet proceeded to comply; but no sooner had the cardinal heard him read the following four lines in the first scene of it—

> En meme temps J'ai vu, sur le bord d'un ruisseau
> La canne s'humecter de la bourbe de l'eau
> D'une voix enrouee, et d'un battement d'aile
> Animer le canard qui languit aupres d'elle,—

than he stopped him short, and, in the fulness of his raptures at the *beauty* of the passage, laid him down fifty pistoles, bidding him at the same time read no further, for that the whole revenue of the

Digitized by Google

crown would not be sufficient to pay, at the rate they deserved, for the rest of the beauties of the piece.

Now, that such of our readers as are not sufficiently acquainted with the French language to understand these lines, may be enabled to form some conception of the taste and genius of the great cardinal Richelieu, a translation of the passage into English is offered them:

So have I seen, inclining to be fond,
The humid duck explore the muddy pond,
Ply her hoarse voice, her wings in dalliance shake,
To animate to love her amorous drake.

It is very justly remarked by the historian, to whom we are indebted for these facts, that in all probability it was this passage which suggested to the Duke of Buckingham that laughable image in the Rehearsal:

So boar and sow, when any storm is nigh,
Snuff up and smell it gathering in the sky;
Boar beckons sow to trot in chesnut grove,
And gently whine their tender tales of love.
Pensive in mud they wallow all alone,
And snort and gruntle to each other's moan.

And to Farquhar also the simile of "two intriguing ducks in a mill pond," which he puts into the mouth of Scrub in the Stratagem.

Some time after the first reading of the piece, the cardinal took it into his head that these beautiful lines might, by a slight alteration, be made infinitely more beautiful, and sent for Colletet to talk with him upon the subject. "I have been thinking, Colletet," said his eminence, "that, by the change of a word or two, the image presented in this passage will be very much heightened, as thus instead of

La canne *s'humecter* de la bourbe de l'eau,—

I would make it

La canne *barboter* dans la bourbe de l'eau.

In plain English, the duck, instead of washing herself, should be said to muddle in the pond. Colletet, unable to determine upon what he should say, requested time to consider the matter, as a thing of too great importance to be lightly or hastily decided upon, and promised to write to his eminence respecting it. He did so, humbly submitting to his patron whether the word *barboter*

Digitized by Google

(muddle) was not too low, and unfit to be applied to so grave and delicate a subject as the chaste passion of a duck and drake. On reading this, the cardinal fell into a transport of rage, to which he was just giving vent when some of the courtiers entered to give him information of a signal victory obtained by the arms of France in a certain battle, the whole preliminary plan of which had been concerted by the cardinal himself. "Nothing," said they, in the usual style of court adulation, "nothing can resist the wisdom and power of your eminence."—"You are mistaken," exclaimed he, still in a rage, "that scoundrel Colletet resists me. I did him the honour to alter a line in his play, and he has the assurance to write me a long letter—here it is—to make me believe that I am wrong."

How such a man as Corneille could have been betrayed, even for a moment, into a confederacy with such a band of slaves as those pandars of Richelieu, it is difficult to imagine. However he was never active in their business, and very soon withdrew himself from it entirely. This incensed the cardinal, who, in return, did every thing he could to injure him. Perhaps there is not, among the many foolish things related concerning Richelieu, one more perfectly absurd than the method he adopted of carrying into effect the revenge he meditated. This was nothing less than to represent once more his play of *Europe*, which had been damned, and set it up in opposition to *The Cid*, one of the noblest dramas ever penned by man. It happened, however, that the people thought of *Europe* very differently from the cardinal, for when the actor came forward to give it out, he was hissed off the stage; nor would the audience suffer any thing to be done till THE CID was given out for the next night.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

BIOGRAPHY.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WARREN,

Actor and Manager of the Philadelphia Theatre.

[Continued from page 151.]

Biggs moving with his company from Bedminster to Taunton prevailed on Warren to join him there. Having now a tolerable set of players with him, particularly Bignell, Baynes, and the family of the Keys, who were all favourites with the people of Taunton, great hopes were entertained of their success in that town, and it was under the influence of those hopes that Warren agreed to accompany them. However he was sadly out in his reckoning; for they could do nothing. Dire necessity pinched them to the very bone, and, to use the words of Macbeth, famine clung to them. Night after night they were compelled to dismiss the house, till at last tired of dismissing, and perhaps ashamed too of their want of attraction, they stopped altogether, and each actor found it necessary to bethink him of the course he should next steer to recruit his finances.

It happened that at that time Mr. Jefferson, the father of our celebrated comedian of that name, was at the head of a company in the beautiful town of Totness, in Devonshire: from him Warren received an invitation with which it may be concluded he cheerfully complied; and accordingly set off in company with another actor, a fine young fellow of the name of Woolley, to join his new associates. Here he opened with Orlando, in the comedy of "As you like it," and young Philpot, in the farce of The Citizen, in both of which he received a very flattering reception. The next night he performed young Mirabel, in Farquhar's charming comedy of The Inconstant, with no less applause. In telling these encouraging circumstances however, Warren always takes care, in the modesty and sincerity of his heart, to qualify the relation with a voluntary acknowledgment that in those strolling companies there are so many very bad players, or, as he calls them, "*shocking fellows*," that a very small portion of merit indeed suffices to impart pleasure

Digitized by Google

and obtain applause. At the time we are now speaking of, our Philadelphia Jefferson was acting boys' parts under his father—probably just such another youngster as his son who now plays the elder of the princes in Richard the Third. After some time spent at Totness, Mr. Jefferson moved to Exeter, and Biggs getting intelligence of it, proceeded without delay to Totness and made Warren offers of a very tempting nature to join him again at Taunton. Knowing that our friend was resolved never again to run the risk of being left entirely in the lurch, but at all events to eat, and that of course he could not expect him to join on the old delusive terms of *shares*, on which he had so often shared nothing, and yet being desirous to procure his services, if possible, he actually made him the generous, splendid offer of a salary of—ten shillings sterling per week!—that is to say, two dollars and twenty-two cents, with a benefit, as customary, at each town. Insignificant as the sum may now appear on this side of the Atlantic, it was then a consummation devoutly to be wished, and was indeed to a temperate young man, unincumbered with wife or children, a comfortable subsistence: a satisfactory proof, no doubt, of the cheapness of the country in which he then resided. Having closed with Biggs, Warren set out for Taunton, not as usual on foot—for as it was winter, he thought it better to go by the stage: "I was now *beginning to rise*," says he, "and took my seat on the *top* of the coach."

I believe it is a truth universally conceded that, with the exception of poets and authors, that genus irritabile vatum, the most irritable and envious beings to each other in this world, are, generally speaking, players; a fact which, how extraordinary soever it appear, may be accounted for on rational principles, and indeed on the same grounds with respect to both. The salary given to Warren stuck like Macbeth's AMEN, in the throats of his brother actors: the thoughts of it did, "like a poisonous mineral, gnaw them inwards," and created much ill blood in the company; and truly when the cause of their discontent, the salary, is considered as regarding the amount of the sum and the work done for it, it will explain more fully than pages of words could, the condition and the consequent feelings of the body of Itinerants. One would hardly imagine that ten shillings a week could be an object of such great importance, more particularly when saddled with the labour of playing perhaps eight or ten characters of various kinds;

Digitized by Google

more especially as Biggs, who was not accustomed to let any one with whom he dealt have the best side of a bargain, exacted from Warren, for this small salary, the further toil of writing out the scene plots. Miserable however as the salary may seem, it was the production of much advantage to our hero's feelings, because being fixed, it exempted him from the peculation of the manager, insured him wherewithal to live, and prevented those heartburnings and bickerings between him and Biggs which the nightly settlement of a sharing plan seldom failed to produce. In this respect, therefore, they got on together tolerably well, having very seldom any cause for contention. The only subject of disagreement between them was the permanence of their connexion—Warren was desirous to go away; Biggs was desirous to keep him. As usual the distresses of the company were great; his weekly ten shillings was all Warren received; for by his benefit he neither gained nor lost any thing. Some few of the benefits succeeded; but they were those only of actors who, groaning under the burdens of wives and children, were fain to solicit personally the support and patronage of the surrounding gentry, or in plain English, to beg—genteelly; the fate too often of worthy and meritorious performers, and which, after all, succeeds at times so badly as to reduce them to the necessity of pawning their clothes to procure food for their families.

Having tired out the people of Taunton, and exhausted the patience of those creatures of sufferance, his actors, Biggs moved off to Honiton, accompanied by no one but Warren, Woolley, Reynolds, and his own family, all the rest having deserted him. At Honiton they were joined by one or two others, but three weeks elapsed before Biggs could get every thing in readiness to perform: meanwhile the young men were not idle. It happened that a company, or rather a fragment of a company, headed by a manager named Smith, lay at Glastonbury in the greatest distress imaginable. Hearing of the arrival of Biggs's company at Honiton, Smith implored their assistance, and begged of Warren to come to Glastonbury and perform a few nights to relieve him and his actors from famine and probably imprisonment. Warren, without hesitation, flew to the assistance of his unfortunate brethren, and, accompanied by his friend Woolley, arrived at Glastonbury.

Mr. Smith's company was no less poor in numbers and low in quality than deplorable in pecuniary condition. Of the talents of the actors it is enough to say that the hero was old Jack Montague,

Digitized by Google

whose name for many years stood conspicuous in strolling annals for the extreme badness of his performance, his consequent poverty, the extravagant opinion he entertained and never omitted an opportunity to express of himself, and above all, his disproportioned and ridiculous self-importance. This poor gentleman, who had long gone by the name of *Old* JACK, was now very far declined into the vale of years, had at all times been of an odd appearance, far from handsome, never over-clean, and, by way of setting off the natural beauty of his externals, chewed tobacco so immoderately that his mouth was always stained brown and his lips besprent with fragments of that filthy herb, while the juice of it oozed from either corner of his mouth down the furrows of his deep channelled chops, like foul bilge water from the scupperholes of a ship, and thence trickling through his beard, bedewed his cravat and bosom. Such was the personage who, on the very night that Warren and Woolley arrived performed the character of Oroonoko to the good people of Glastonbury, while Mr. Smith, who though manager, was so inferior to old Jack as to play second to him, performed the part of Aboan, and a shrivelled weatherbeaten old maid, of the name of Francis, figured away as the lovely Imoinda. Poor old Jack had one piece of property, and only one in the world, beside his clothes: this was a curtain of about four yards square, at once his pride, his comfort and his boast. To an acquaintance with this pompous travelling circumstance every new comer was without delay introduced, and every day received a commemorative hint respecting its value and importance, accompanied with an assurance, which it was treason against Jack's majesty to doubt, that it had risen and fallen upon better acting than any other curtain in the king's dominions, those of Drury-lane and Covent-garden themselves not excepted.

The night succeeding their arrival the School for Scandal was got up. Woolley played Sir Peter Teazle, and Warren, Joseph Surface, in which, as the wardrobe of Smith was too lean* to afford a dress suitable to the character, our hero was fain to content himself with a black suit, borrowed from the sexton of the parish church: but he minded it not; the house was good, and poor Smith and his company had a fair prospect of at least a temporary relief. From

* "Yea, for the obtaining of suits, whereof the hangman hath no *lean* wardrobe."

Digitized by Google

motives merely of benevolence, Woolley and Warren remained at Glastonbury till two or three days before the opening of the theatre at Honiton, during which time they performed several plays, and did great service to Smith without accepting a farthing for their labour—their board, and nothing more, being supplied by Smith.

On their return to Honiton, Biggs performed there and at St. Mary Ottery, with tolerable success, which continued for some time. Thence they went to Tiverton, which Biggs, to his inexpressible rage and mortification, found already preoccupied by one Williams a country manager, and his company. Blinded by envy, and by passion, and rendered insensible to every other consideration, Biggs resolved upon making a spirited opposition, and to that end took possession of the parsonage barn, fitted it up and began the warfare with all his powers, which were now augmented by a reinforcement from London, of two strayed actors, Maxfield and Atkins. This step of Biggs had more of malice than wisdom in it; for though he kept the field he gained no victory, but rather lost time and money. At the best, the town was not worth a contest. Williams more prudent saw the folly of contesting the point and marched off, though he had some tolerable actors, among whom were Powell, and Mrs. Hogg, the latter being the heroine of the company.

And now the time approached when our hero was to separate from Biggs forever, and follow new fortunes. They were at that sweet watering place Sidmouth in Devonshire, when Biggs being again deserted by all his company, but Warren, Woolley and his own children, set off to Sherborne in Dorsetshire to pick up as many as he could of the company of Baker, a country manager, the same who has since been so well known at Boston. Warren corresponded with Maxfield who was now engaged at Plymouth, and who made an engagement for him and Woolley, with Mr. Jefferson the manager of that theatre. As soon as this intelligence reached them, the two young fellows, on a fine, clear morning in summer set out on foot and carrying their effects upon their shoulders walked, without once stopping to the city of Exeter (26 miles). They had between them not many pence; for though Mr. Jefferson had sent money to them to bear their expenses, it missed them, owing to the suddenness of their departure. After having regaled themselves at Exeter therefore with the best their finances would allow them, to wit, a cut or two of bread and a pot

Digitized by Google

of beer, they pushed on as fast as possible in order to reach Plymouth before their little was expended, and at an early hour reached Chudleigh a town nine miles from Exeter. Stopping here to rest themselves they accidentally fell in with their old friend Tag Davis the manager, who gave them a good dinner, which was well timed and by them greeted, "not with vain thanks but with acceptance bounteous."—Exercise conspiring with youth and constitutional vigour and with no small degree of that kind of internal yearning to which the sense of an empty pocket is hugely apt to dispose an empty stomach, harped their appetites aright, and rendered them so condescendingly complying with the solicitations of their hospitable friend, to do justice to his mutton, that they laid lustily about them, plying their knives and forks and bestirring their jaws with such energy and good will that they made a dinner which, to borrow a thought from Gil Blas, might excite envy in the canon of a cathedral. To this day it is remembered with many satisfactory and friendly recollections by our hero. "Tag was a kind honest soul," says he with warm emotions of friendship, "he gave us a good dinner, and I never ate so heartily in all my life."

While they were waiting for dinner Davis informed them that Jefferson's company was so very full, the probability was, they would get nothing to do at Plymouth, and therefore advised them to stay with him. He told them that he was then building a theatre at Westout, Exeter, under the patronage and encouragement of Mr. Friar a merchant of that place, who was resolved to oppose and injure Hughes the manager of the Exeter theatre, and who to that end supplied him (Davis) with money. He added that his company was then at Bovey Tracey on Tracey Common, not far from Exeter, where they would continue to perform till his new theatre was in readiness; and he concluded with offers of a kind too flattering to be hastily rejected. As they were persuaded from the circumstances related by Davis, that his information respecting the fulness of Jefferson's company was true, as the offers he made them were liberal and friendly, and as they knew him too well to doubt his sincerity, however they might question his prudence, they, on mature reflection, agreed to close with his proposals, and accordingly repairing to Exeter went thence to take a view of Bovey Tracey with intention to join the company, hoping they should get at least enough for their support till the theatre at

Digitized by Google

Westout opened. When the night of performance came, Warren, Woolley, Davis, and ITINERANT RILEY and his wife, who were of the company went across to Tracey on foot. The play was Jane Shore, Hastings by Reynolds. "Of all the theatrical adventures in which during my life I have been concerned," says Warren, "this was the very worst. When I looked at the place, I was really unable to stand it: in the audience nothing was to be seen, but smock frocks and red cloaks." Under these impressions, he candidly observed to Reynolds that it was not worth his while to stay there, and desired him not to calculate on his performing the next night, for that he intended to go back to Exeter. The pride of Reynolds was hurt by this observation: he was nettled; grew lofty, and told Warren that they could do very well without him.

In Tracey there were two public houses; and it was in a hayloft belonging to one of these which stood at the lower end of the town, the company performed. Warren leaving the play-loft went down stairs and entering the taproom found a parcel of farmers sitting round the fire; they asked him to join them; he sat down and relishing their company very well stayed with them till the play was over, when the performers coming down he joined them, and they proceeded to make a dividend of the proceeds of their performance. It was not here as it used to be with Biggs: all was fair, not a farthing, but what justice intitled him to, was detained by Davis. The consequence was, that the shares were not contemptible for such a place; each received between five and six shillings. It was again proposed to Warren to join them, and by way of inducement an offer was made, to give him a fair share of that night's profits, provided he would undertake to play with them on the next. He agreed; Romeo and Juliet was the play appointed; and he undertook to play the two characters of Tibalt and Paris in the tragedy, as well as that of Lord Minnikin in the farce. He did so, and had played about eight nights altogether, when he was unexpectedly interrupted by the arrival of Biggs, who having received intelligence, where Warren and Woolley were playing, had come in pursuit of them.

The taverns of Tracey were all so full that Warren was obliged to sleep on a pallet laid upon the floor. One morning as he was reposing in this condition, his ears were assailed with a strange kind of thumping noise which awakened and somewhat startled him. On listening with all his attention he imagined that the sounds

Digitized by Google

very much resembled those produced by the club foot of Biggs as he was used to stump up stairs: as it approached nearer the resemblance appeared more strong; and he was put out of doubt upon the subject by the voice of his old greasy manager calling out in his usual loud tone, "is this here door, the room where they bees in?" Warren had scarcely a moment to reflect on this strange incident when the door flew open, and in stumped Biggs himself. "So so, here you are, are you?" said he, squatting himself down on a chair, "a pretty fellow, to think to fum Biggs—O you're a sly one, but I'm up to you—I know a thing or two—You can't put your finger in my eye, cunning as you are." "What do you mean?" said Warren—"What do you want with me?" "A rum question that too!—Why, what should I want, but to speak to you?"—"Well then" returned Warren, "go down stairs and I will dress myself and follow you directly." As Warren spoke in a peremptory tone, Biggs thought proper to comply and retired, desiring the other not to keep him long. Warren put on his clothes as quickly as he could, and joined Biggs who at first addressed him with affected kindness, and endeavoured to prevail upon him to return to his company, which Warren peremptorily refused. Biggs then changed his tone and threatened to resort to law, and call on the magistrates to compel him to go back and perform his contracts; to this Warren replied that neither was there any contract subsisting between them, nor should, nor could any magistrate in the realm force him to have any further connexion with him. He then reminded Biggs that his engagement was not a permanent one; that he (Biggs), had been deserted by his whole company; and that for three weeks during which they had been at Sidmouth with him, neither Woolley nor he had received a shilling; at the end of which time they had been left to shift for themselves in a strange place, unprovided and idle. "Ay, ay," said Biggs, "then d—n me but I'll be up to you," and left the house. Our hero could easily perceive that the brutal fellow intended mischief, but when, how, or in what form it was practicable for him to accomplish it, neither Warren nor Woolley could imagine.

They were not long left in doubt upon it. Biggs returned with an officer whom he desired to arrest *them there fellows*. What the grounds of arrest assumed by him were, they could not surmise; but knowing that he was profligate enough to swear to any thing, and to charge them with any crime however villanous, even rob-

Digitized by Google

bery itself, they felt very uneasy. As the magistrate, before whom they were to be brought for commitment, lived at a distance of fifteen miles, horses were ordered. Woolley rode behind Davis who resolved to accompany them; and Warren sat behind the constable while Biggs rode in great state by himself. Davis had formerly been an attorney in Dublin, knew something of the law, and could talk learnedly. When they arrived at the house of the magistrate, they were given to understand that his worship was at that time engaged in the examination of some other culprits; and that they must wait, to have that honour in their proper turn. After dancing attendance for a considerable time, they were at length called in, when the magistrate demanded of Biggs what the nature of his charge against the prisoners was. And now their anxiety and apprehensions were wound up to a painful pitch, they expecting to have some very serious accusation preferred against them, one perhaps, from which they should never be able to extricate themselves, without difficulty, when behold their honest accuser charged them with being journeymen tailors, whom he had hired to make clothes for him, and who had gone away from him, leaving their work unfinished. To this the magistrate answered that it was a business in which it was not competent to him to interfere; and that therefore he would not do any thing but dismiss the young men. On this Biggs flew into a great rage, and was so rude that the magistrate rebuked him, and bid him take care what he said or did. Then turning to Warren, he read him a long lecture, replete with good sense, and kindness, and strenuously advised him to return home to his friends and family, and mind his business. Being thus liberated from the fangs of that wolf Biggs, at least for this turn, Warren and his friend Woolley walked back together to Tracey.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS OF ROBERT WILLIAM ELLISTON.

Mr. Elliston was born in the parish of Bloomsbury, 1774. His father, a watchmaker of some eminence, resided for many years in Charles-street, Covent-garden; his late uncle was the Rev. Dr. Elliston,* the much esteemed master of Sidney College, Cambridge; who intended his nephew for the church, and placed him, when nine years old, at St. Paul's school. Having gained some applause in an English Thesis† which he delivered in public in the year 1790, he imbibed an immediate inclination for the stage; and shortly after this effort, performed the part of Pierre, at the Lyceum in the Strand, then occasionally opened as a private theatre. Pursuits of this description naturally produced remonstrance, and finally anger, on the part of those who had pointed out a very different career. His fancy, however, soared beyond the reach of prudence, and he quitted school at the age of sixteen, without the knowledge of his friends; and resolving to try his success on the stage, he accompanied a friend to Bath, where he engaged himself as a clerk in a lottery office, and remained in that capacity a few weeks till he found an opportunity of making his theatrical essay, which was in the humble character of Tressel, in Richard III.‡ Notwithstanding the success of his first efforts, it appears, that he was unfortunate in his desire of procuring an engagement, the company being full, and the manager of a provincial theatre frequently looking with a

* In consequence of the death of this gentleman, Mr. Elliston is said to have come into the possession of 15,000*l.*

† The subject of this Thesis was,

"Nemo confidat nimium secundis."

Trust not prosperity's alluring wreath,
The thorns of adverse fortune lurk beneath.

‡ Colley Cibber, known only for some years by the name of Master Colley, made his first appearance in an inferior situation. After waiting impatiently for the prompter's notice, he by good fortune obtained the honour of carrying a message on the stage to one of the chief actors of that day, whom he greatly disconcerted. Betterton asked in some anger, who it was that had committed the blunder? Downs, the prompter, replied, "Master Colley."—"Then forfeit him," rejoined the other.—"Why, sir, he has no salary."—"No! then put him down ten shillings a week, and forfeit him five." To this good natured adjustment of rewards and punishments, Cibber owed the first money he took in the treasury office.

Digitized by Google

suspicious eye to the increased expenditure of twenty-five shillings per week.

In consequence, however, of the recommendation of Mr. Wallis (father of the late amiable Miss Wallis, now Mrs. Campbell), he was engaged by Tate Wilkinson at York, where he experienced so much disappointment and vexation, as the principal characters were all in the possession of other performers, that he soon became weary of his condition, and wrote to his uncle a supplicating letter for pardon and indulgence. His application having had the desired effect, he returned to London, and through the medium of Professor Martyn (another of his uncles), and Dr. Farmer, he obtained an interview with the late George Steevens, Esq. the editor of Shakspeare, who introduced him to Mr. Kemble. This gentleman recommended him to study Romeo, against the opening of the present splendid building of Drury-lane; but his patience having been exhausted before the house could open, and his circumstances not being in the most affluent state, he applied to Mr. Dimond, the Bath manager, who was then performing at the Richmond theatre, by whom he was immediately engaged. On his return to Bath, in the year 1793, he made his appearance in the character of Romeo, and found his former efforts had not been forgotten. A number of trifling circumstances, such as the indisposition of performers, &c. afforded a favourable opportunity of calling into action a versatility of powers which was before unknown even to himself, and soon rendered him a distinguished favourite.

While in the plenitude of his great and almost unprecedented success, the majestic doors of the new theatre, Drury-lane, were opened. Professor Martyn applied for information as to the terms his nephew was likely to procure if he came to town; and was given to understand, that forty, fifty, or sixty shillings per week, on a three years' engagement, were as much as could be hazarded on the abilities of a mere novice. This offer was prudently rejected, and Elliston immediately closed with the proposals of the Bath managers, who were anxious to engage him for a certain term.

Among the most successful of Mr. Elliston's efforts may be reckoned his obtaining about this time the hand and heart of a most respectable public character at Bath (Miss Rundall), who was as celebrated for her beauty, as for her skill in unravelling the mysteries of the mazy dance. Mrs. Elliston, now the mother of five children, is elegant in her manners, enjoys the patronage

Digitized by Google

of persons of the first distinction, and at present takes the lead of all competitors in the school of Terpsichore. Thus fortunate in his choice, and happy in domestic life, it is more than probable, that he would have remained content with the laurels the inhabitants of Bath were daily intwining round his brow, had not a promise been given to Mr. Colman, to perform at his theatre; and before the expiration of his honeymoon, he accordingly ventured to tread the London boards, June the 24th, 1796, in the arduous character of Octavian, in the Mountaineers, and Vappr, in the farce of My Grandmother: in each of these parts his efforts were crowned with success. Having thus fulfilled the promise he had made, he was obliged to return to Bath, to close the theatrical campaign of 1796, according to the letter of his article with Mr. Dimond. But Mr. Colman, being aware of the value of Mr. Elliston's youthful energies, secured him for the remainder of the season. A powerful reason soon after evinced itself for the manager's attachment to this dramatic stripling. The failure of The Iron Chest, on its original representation at Drury-lane theatre, and the singular circumstances attending it, are fresh in the minds of the *amateurs*. Mr. Colman was doubtless eager to preserve his literary fame, and holding the powers of our young actor in no inconsiderable estimation, determined on risking the performance of that play at his own theatre; and Mr. Elliston assumed the part of Sir Edward Mortimer, to the entire satisfaction of the public and the author.* In the course of the same season he acquired considerable celebrity from his personification of Sheva, in The Jew. The growing reputation of this gentleman at length induced Mr. Harris, the manager of Covent-garden theatre, to engage him to play at stated intervals, an indulgence kindly granted by Messrs. Palmer and Dimond, with whom he had now renewed his articles for three years. The novelty of this undertaking occasioned considerable jealousy in the Green room, and obtained for him the facetious appellation of the "Telegraph, or Fortnight Actor." His exertions in this way, however, did not answer the expectations of either party; and at his own earnest solicitation, Mr. Harris was induced to cancel the articles. During the following summer he resumed his situation at the Hay-market, with the same success as before, and then returned to Bath.

* That Mr. Colman was not only pleased, but delighted on this occasion, will be seen from the second edition of the Iron Chest.

Digitized by Google

On the secession of Mr. Dimond, Mr. Elliston obtained a large addition of characters, and from this period to the time of his leaving that city, he may be literally considered as the prop of the theatre.

At this period Mr. Colman selected a company of performers from different country theatres, and engaged Mr. Elliston for three years, as principal actor, and stage manager; but being wanted at the Haymarket so early as the 15th of May, and the Bath theatre not closing till July or August, he was obliged to purchase the indulgence by a renewal of articles at Bath.

Although in the course of the season no particular novelty offered itself, with the exception of Love Laughs at Locksmiths; yet it concluded successfully; the royal family, who, since a much regretted and melancholy event,* had but once visited the Little Theatre for several years, having honoured it with their successive weekly commands, from an interest they took in the success of Mr. Elliston.

The great variety of characters† into which the young manager had, from the nature of the undertaking, been obliged to throw himself, drew the attention of some of the winter proprietors; and pecuniary offers of no inconsiderable magnitude were proposed for his acceptance in the event of his joining the Drury-lane corps; but this point, however desirable to the gratification of his ambition, could not be brought about without the greatest inconvenience in respect to his other engagements. He would willingly have paid the forfeiture of 500*l.* by way of compensation to Messrs. Palmer and Dimond, but this was resisted and the completion of his term demanded. After some negotiation, however, it ended in a compromise of giving up one year of the engagement; thus leaving him at liberty to listen to other proposals at the conclusion of the

* In the year 1794, his majesty commanded a play at the Little Theatre, Haymarket, which drew a crowded audience to the house, and in endeavouring to obtain an early admission into the pit, a scuffle ensued in the entrance of the passage, which occasioned several persons to lose their footing on the steps to the pay-door. This produced the most dreadful confusion, and six or seven persons lost their lives.

† The following enumeration will illustrate the assertion: Sir Edward Mortimer, Walter, Octavian, Abednego, Sheva, Young Wilding, Doctor Pangloss, Captain Beldair, Henry V., Ben Block, &c. &c.

Digitized by Google

season of 1803. Accordingly at the end of that period, after a long and most laborious attention to the duties of his profession, he made a final bow to his friends at Bath, and prepared for a summer campaign.

The season of 1804 is rendered remarkable in the biography of this gentleman, from his benefit being at the Opera-house, where it attracted such crowds, that the house was literally taken by storm. At the entrance into the boxes, as well as at the pit, the torrent was so impetuous, that the door-keepers, money-takers, and assistants, were overwhelmed, and a scene of great confusion ensued, which none but those who witnessed it can conceive. Fortunately, no accident occurred, and the kindness of a British audience extricated a favourite from one of the most painful and arduous situations it was possible to encounter. The play was Pizarro, and the receipts 600*l.* but if all the places occupied during the confusion had been paid for, they would have amounted to 1000*l.* being the largest sum of money ever received by an actor at his benefit.

In 1804 he accepted a situation at Drury-lane, where he was engaged as a principal performer, and to assume both sock and buskin; and where he has personified Hamlet, Benedick, Macbeth, Ranger, Othello, Doricourt, Romeo, and Penruddock. If the person of Mr. Garrick is to be considered as the standard of an actor's stature, Mr. Elliston may, if any thing, be taller than the unrivalled hero of the British stage, while the other parts of his person appear anatomically correct, and duly proportioned. To the countenance and eyes of this gentleman, nature has certainly been favourable, as they contain those marks of expression which want only study to render him fully efficient in all the various duties of his profession. In respect to the expression and gracefulness of his attitudes, no objection can fairly be made. We have often attended to the deportment of his person, and never found cause to consider any part of his action as either redundant or inelegant.

Othello is a performance in which he is not regularly great; although he sometimes bursts upon the audience in such a manner as to excite admiration. The fire of his youth leads him in this character, as in Hamlet, into too much occasional hurry, which time and reflection will no doubt soften down.

The requisites for the performance of Macbeth are of such a peculiar kind, that the man who possesses them in an eminent de-

Digitized by Google

gree, is in some measure but ill calculated for parts of an opposite description; yet this ardent candidate for fame never assumes the character without exhibiting many features of originality in his delineation of it. His performance, however, is by no means so methodized as that of Kemble, or rendered so complete, when considered as a whole. Elliston dazzles us with repeated flashes of original genius and conception, leaving intervals to discover the imperfections of his youthful efforts. But his performance clearly shows that he may be in that character, what at present he is not. In respect to comedy, Mr. Elliston sustains a wide range with a happy effect; but his genteel characters have always been most esteemed. That mellowness, however, which time alone can bestow, is still wanting; and when he has been allowed more leisure for the study of his respective parts, he will perhaps become as celebrated for the greatness and perfection of his scenic efforts, as he is now for his usefulness and versatility.

In the late Mr. Tobin's play of the Curfew, Mr. Elliston has evinced considerable improvement in the scenic art; and with the exception of his performance in the Honey-moon, he never exhibited a more finished piece of acting on the London stage. His delivery is void of all rant, and the passions of the part he expresses in those under tones of voice which unite energy with a fine discrimination of feeling. He delineates all the transitions of the soul with great descriptive excellence; preserves all the proportions of his portrait under a regular system of thought, and displays them in a rich and masterly tone of colouring. His Fitzharding is the *chef d'œuvre* of this gentleman.

If Mr. Elliston had any physical imperfection which was an obvious impediment to his professional exertions and prosperity, and which no endeavours on his part could remove, our publicity of it might appear ill natured, and operate as an injury to his public life; but when we are about to mention his inattention to propriety of dress, our remarks must be only taken as they are really meant, namely, that of rendering his person accordant in every respect with the character he assumes, as well for his own reputation as the pleasing effect a well-dressed performer affords to his audience.

In the support of early English characters, in which the costume is, in a great degree, regulated by fancy, Mr. Elliston is more happy in the arrangement of his dress; but when he appears as a

Digitized by Google

modern gentleman, he displays no taste in either the clothes he wears, or in putting them on. White *small clothes* with a blue coat and white waistcoat, constitute the dress of *his private gentleman*, either in winter or summer, which gives him more the appearance of a holiday-fop, or a smart hair-dresser, than an elegant gentleman. Mr. Elliston we think is less excusable for this negligence of attire than many of his brethren, because he mixes in the gay circles of fashionable life, where he must see men of elegant dress and deportment in a drawing-room. With a little more attention to the dressing of his hair, and to the costume of a private gentleman, he would appear to considerably more advantage before the public than he has ever yet done. Nature has given him a good figure, and while he continues to offer himself to public notice, it is a duty he owes to the consequence of his public character and to his audience, to give the most decisive effect to whatever character he takes upon himself to assume.

He wrote a play called The Venetian Outlaw, which was represented with great success for several nights after his benefit at Drury-lane in 1805.

MISCELLANY.

LAW AND DRAMA.

An attentive perusal of the lives of all the dramatic writers and actors, unfolds a fact on which a very curious philosophical inquiry might be founded. Many of those who have figured on the stage as performers, and a large majority of those who have been eminently successful in writing for it, have been originally bred to the study of the law. A fact so predominating in such a number of instances, cannot be the result of mere accident, and therefore manifestly indicates that there must exist, some connexion however imperceptible to the world in general, between the law and the drama. Congreve, Rowe, Wycherly, Banks, Murphy, the Colmans, Sheridan, Reynolds, Morton, without enumerating a long *etc.*, were either students or practitioners of the law. Had those gentlemen perused the quaintness of Coke, with the same eagerness they scanned the beauties of the poets, or *could* they have paid the

Digitized by Google

same attention to the enacting clauses of the statutes, as they have to the volumes of Shakspeare, Massinger, and Ben Jonson, I have no doubt they would have made as great a progress in one path of excellence as the other.

Dramatic authors may be said to resemble comets, guided by some laws and properties which regulate other bodies, though at the same time subject to move in such orbits of eccentricity, that you can hardly reduce their qualities or dependencies to any problematic accuracy. That there is a connexion between the law and the drama, I think, cannot be disallowed. I would take up a few minutes of your time in endeavouring to trace it; but before we set out on this trifling, though hitherto untrodden journey, let us perfectly understand each other; and we shall jog on the road quietly together. First, then, I must begin, perhaps boldly, by saying that genius is the same in all as far as respects *quality;* the only point mankind will differ in will be as to the *quantity* they individually possess. This quantity will vary in its effects, when impelled by prejudices of education, or habits of intercourse. If then genius is to be estimated not by *quality*, for that we allow to be the same, but by quantity, if that *quantity* can be modified by force of habit, or education, the point we wish to discuss may be easily ascertained.

I know I have a great authority, which to superficial observers may seem to overturn my premises, for Akenside says,

> " With wise intent,
> " The hand of nature on *peculiar* minds
> " Imprints a *different* bias."

Though this passage, at first sight, may be thought to militate against the groundwork of my hypothesis, yet, if properly examined, I believe it rather strengthens it, and proves what I said in the beginning of this essay, that dramatic authors, like eccentric planets, had properties, such as gravitation, attractions, &c. common to other constellations; but at the same time, were governed by *peculiar* laws, which, *imprinting* a *different* bias on their systems, made them verge farther from, or approach nearer to their respective centres of motion. Akenside does not deny the " *quality*" of genius; for, supposing (which, in life, is found to be very true) that nine tenths of mankind possess abilities equal in extent, and bounded by mediocrity; yet there are some particular minds on which na-

Digitized by Google

ture imprints this different bias; that is, enlarges this *quantity* or expansion of faculty, to comprehend, as he emphatically remarks,

"The fabric of the spheres
"The golden zones of heaven."

Or to weigh

"Fate's unbroken chain and will's quick impulse."

It may be objected, that, according to this hypothesis, a man might be a poet, a blacksmith, a mechanic, or a philosopher, if his education or intercourse led him to these pursuits; and if this were the case, a person could be only of the profession for which he was educated; and thus cavillers might introduce living instances and examples, to contradict such an assertion; but, in reply to this, I simply discriminate between *talents* and *genius*.

Genius is the general disposition of the mind for natural improvement; *talents* are the particular tendency of it. *Genius*, if I may be allowed the expression, is the fire or sun of the soul; *talents* are the rays which proceed in different directions from it. There may be *genius* without *talents*—there can be *talents* without *genius*. Three fourths of the world are men of *genius*, hardly one fourth men of *talents*. This may account for an observation which is made of mankind in general: that many people of what we term equal or moderate abilities, glide through life with no *particular* tendency of talent, with a general disposition to improvements of every kind. If this be granted, it is the *talent*, and not the *genius*, which constitutes the eccentric movement, and gives the different bias. The habits of intercourse or education would improve this tendency, though they could not destroy it. I conclude my figurative hypothesis by observing, that those minds which are occupied in a variety of pursuits, will scarcely ever approach to excellence, as a *general* distraction of rays will enervate the powers, and dim the brilliancy of genius, while those who adhere to one or two branches of improvement, from a concentration of force, (for if the pursuits are nearly similar, the talents will approximate, or, if opposite to each other, shine with greater lustre), will receive, in both instances, strength and fire from the centre of irradiation.

If, then, I can prove that persons pursuing the study of the law, have occasion to review men and manners, I arrive at this point of my position, that their *genius*, improved by study, leads them to the knowledge of mankind; if this be allowed, it follows, then, that

Digitized by Google

should their talents irradiate beyond this point, they will be the most proper persons, nay, will generally become dramatic authors; but if their *genius* concentrates here, they fall within my definition of three fourths of mankind, whose abilities never soar above mediocrity.

In studying the law then, we learn men and manners, by precept and example—1st by precept.

In examining the spirit of the law of nations, as far as respects the policy of states, we observe the prejudices of party, the petulance of faction, and schemes of general government. By pursuing the inquiry further (for history is absolutely blended with the study of the law) we learn the manners of the party who composed a faction, their views, and how far their interest had led them to make a stretch of power subservient to their passions. By going a very little further, we learn what these passions were, which gave elasticity to the springs of action, and particular movement to the whole machine. I could trace my arguments farther, by examining the characters of eminent legal personages, as connected with the history of our own civil government; but I should perhaps exceed the limits allowed for an essay of this kind.

The second point is easily discussed: by intercourse, that is what I mean *by example*, (for I suppose a lawyer has the most extensive intercourse with mankind, of any person in being) he comes to a very accurate knowledge of human nature, not only by the society he must move in, to increase his connexions, but by the *observations* he must make of the manners of mankind, that he may be able forcibly to appeal to the passions of every person who is qualified to compose a part of the jury of his country. A considerable degree of knowledge is acquired also, from attending courts of judicature; a variety of eccentric characters appear as witnesses; or, if he wishes now and then to be acquainted with the infamous modes of deceit, so often practised on the unsuspecting stranger in this great city, his attendance on criminal prosecutions, or knowledge of the crown bar, as treated by Colquhoun, will enable him to dive into the depths, and develop the mysteries which disgrace the opulent metropolis we live in. If he possess this fund of useful information, if he can exhibit a picture of these vices in the face of day, who is so proper a person as himself, "to hold the mirror up to nature?" Thus by precept and example, the student of the bar obtains a knowledge of *men and manners*. I will say nothing

Digitized by Google

of the vacant time he has on his hands, when perhaps to improve his powers of speaking, he attends theatres, and imbibes an early desire for stage productions and exhibitions.

As I have transgressed all bounds, I will take up a page or two of your next number, with a few more remarks, while I conclude this essay by observing, that I think, I have now proved, that the genius of a student at the bar, leads him to the knowledge of mankind; if then his talents irradiate beyond this point, he will become a dramatic author.

For the Mirror of Taste.

Mr. Editor,

You have compelled me to reveal some other unfortunate incidents of my character, which a man of so tender and delicate nerves might wish buried in obscurity and silence. In my last communication I hinted that a certain lady to whom my addresses were paid, discontinued her favourable regards because I was convicted of eating pea-nuts,* while Othello was smothering Desdemona. This lady was a sprightly widow, beautiful in her appearance, but what riveted my adoration, she inherited a large patrimonial estate without any children by her former husband, which I should have regarded in the light of mortgages. She seemed to entertain no unfavourable opinion of the match until the adventure of the pea-nut unfortunately exposed that nonchalance trait of my character, which I now do not hesitate to acknowledge. She was possessed by nature of a strong sensibility that had been heightened and inflamed by the study of novels and romance. An union between two of characters so opposite would have resembled a wedlock between a sunbeam and an icicle. However, I persevered in defiance of the pea-nut, and might probably have overcome the antipathy occasioned by that incident, had it not been my misfortune to have been opposed by a formidable rival. This man wore an epaulette that I did not much regard; but the truncheon that intersected his person in a right line was to me, an object of more serious contemplation. Knowing the passion of my Amanda for novels, and how poorly I was qualified to perform the character of Rinaldo, I laboured with all my might and main

* "*Ground nuts.*"

Digitized by Google

to persuade her that a duel was no criterion of courage. I told her that it was my determination to make a bold stand against the caprice of the day, and if civilly invited to a contest of that kind to give decisive evidence of my courage by declining the invitation. The greatest men of antiquity looked upon their lives as in some sort the property of the public, and consequently inferred that the public alone had a right to the disposal. Sir, I never saw a pistol or a sword, but what I felt a certain foreboding anxiety that my life was intimately connected with the safety of the commonwealth. And in times so perilous as the present, is it not the duty of one who feels for his country's honour, one who abhors duelling, to reserve his life for great and important occasions? Notwithstanding these arguments are so obvious, nothing is more common, and to the shame of the age I proclaim it, than to behold the names of some of my brother patriots posted in our public papers as pitiful poltroons and cowards. Now, sir, to bear this with becoming dignity is in my mind the criterion of courage. These arguments so obvious and irresistible I attempted with all the eloquence in my power to impress upon the mind of my Amanda. I was perfectly aware of the prejudices of the public, and how ungrate that body is prone to be for the important services which patriots of my class intend to render their country. She listened with much attention, and I flattered myself that I had made a proselyte to my principles. My military rival, in the affections of Amanda, had before this broad avowal of my motives behaved towards me with the courtesy of a gentleman. We exchanged salutes very cordially, and I was by long practice enabled to look with some composure on the instrument that dangled by his side. From some cause or other, and to me it was perfectly inscrutable, his whole demeanor suddenly underwent a total alteration. He never returned my civility, but passed me with an indifference bordering on contempt. If I happened to meet him in the company of Amanda, he engrossed all the conversation, rioted on every smile, and left me the solitary consolation of fumbling my watch key in a neglected corner of the room. I remonstrated against his conduct with becoming indignation, and to my utter astonishment received a message of the following import. I hope Mr. Editor, you will pardon the illegibility of my writing; for my hand, at the distance of fourteen years from the time of the trans-

Digitized by Google

action, shakes with such violence I can hardly preserve the mastery of my pen.

Sir,

The language which you uttered last night was such as no gentleman can hear. My demand is that you give me instant reparation. My friend, ——, to whom I have communicated my intentions will make every necessary arrangement. Yours, &c.

After I had acquired sufficient composure to hold the pen, I returned the following answer:

Sir,

The tenor of your note is too plain to be doubted. I have to observe in reply, that my country to whom my life is devoted, cannot dispense with the services of her patriots, which puts me under the inevitable necessity of declining your invitation. You must observe, sir, that this is no choice of mine, but forced upon me by circumstances over which I have no control; and I hope that no perseverance on your part will compel me to resort to the laws of my country for protection.

Thus, Mr. Editor, ended this controversy; but the sequel of my courtship may easily be imagined. Amanda tired of my addresses informed my military rival of my determination if I should ever be summoned to the field, and suggested this expedient to put an end to my visits. The result was, that my rival inherits the lands I fell in love with, and that I shall ever hereafter remain the bachelor,

SIMON SHADOW.

The following review is extracted from a British publication of high repute. We think it interesting, as it contains not only some acute and well written observations on the personal requisites of Cooke and Kemble for their profession, but some opinions equally just and ingenuous respecting the country and people of England.

The Stranger in England; or, Travels in Great Britain. Containing Remarks on the Politics, Laws, Manners, Customs, and distinguished Characters of that Country; and chiefly its Metropolis: with Criticisms on the Stage. The whole interspersed with a variety of Characteristic Anecdotes. From the German of C. A. G. Goede. In Three Volumes, 12mo.; 15s. Matthews and Leigh, London: 1807.

The statements and opinions of Englishmen, with respect to other countries, have always been perused here with great avidity; but as we can neither confirm nor refute the accounts they are

Digitized by Google

pleased to deliver to us, the authors, no doubt, frequently give a loose to imagination; and, when they are at a loss for facts, substitute whatever comes uppermost, without regard either to truth or probability. Their maxim is to *elevate and surprise*, and, setting detection at defiance, they boldly follow the career of *Baron Munchausen*, resolved to be equally marvellous, if they cannot rival him in entertainment. The *Stranger in England*, on the contrary, is more likely to deceive *himself* than *us*: if he *says his mind freely*, his remarks will merit our attention; he will exhibit to us, in their true colours, many manners and customs to which our national prejudice has given a hue that does not properly belong to them; and even his *own prejudices* (for what country is without them?) will afford matter for reflection and inquiry that may prove both interesting and useful.

M. Goede seems to be an ingenuous and intelligent writer; and, as far as we are enabled to judge, has taken a close and pretty accurate survey of our country. He arrived in England in 1802, just before the peace of Amiens, and remained here nearly two years. On his return to Germany he communicated his observations to his countrymen in five volumes, from which the most interesting parts are extracted in this translation.

The author commences with a liberal, and we feel happy in adding, a just compliment to our nation, "where (he says,) the genius of commerce has erected his standard, and the goddess of liberty has fixed her abode."

"The generality of travellers found their expectation respecting the national wealth of this country, upon the airy visions of their own heated brains. They figure to themselves magnificent castles for the nobles, streets composed of splendid palaces for the rich, and every exterior of pomp and luxury: while the *people* form a back ground to their picture, grouped in miserable classes of poverty and wretchedness. But what do they find the reality? Here princes, lords, and commons, inhabit *one* description of houses; and many a wealthy Englishman devotes his life to the simplicity and domestic comforts of retirement.—No powerful baron presumes to aim at unbecoming preeminence; misery retires to the asylum which humanity provides for its relief; and an enviable equality is every where visible. The people appear to govern, while they obey; and never, on important questions, are they to be awed into a passive and abject submission."

Digitized by Google

As M. Goede has travelled into different parts of the world, he makes several comparisons between London and the principal cities of other countries, particularly *Paris;* and his observations seem to be guided by candour and veracity. These comparisons, and the reflections which the author indulges on our manners and amusements, are in fact the most valuable part of his performance, for we cannot feel much interested by descriptions of buildings and streets which we daily see, or of occupations in which we are constantly employed; though even here there may be sufficient novelty to many Englishmen, who, feeling no curiosity, have made no inquiries, and who, having once visited the Tower, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, and the Monument, are satisfied that they have seen every thing in the metropolis that is worthy of attention.

We thank M. Goede for the following opinion of our domestic character:

"I do not know a more interesting sight than an English fireside: and though the English are described to be a people unsusceptible of the finer feelings of the soul, and insensible to the charms of filial or parental affection, all who have had opportunities of domesticating in English families, must smile at the invidious falsehood.

"This remark I understand to have originated in a Frenchman; and I cannot forbear laughing at the impudence of the charge, when I reflect, that, in France, no ties, not even that of marriage, are more lightly considered, than those of consanguinity.

"In England, a magic circle round the fireside, encompasses every blessing; they love, but they seem to do so in their own way. An Englishman detests the very semblance of any thing sentimental; whereas the third word from a Frenchman's lips, is always '*his heart.*' Now, in this country, I have never heard the term mentioned, except by divines or anatomists. The English are satisfied with the consciousness of feeling love, friendship, gratitude, and every honourable emotion; they leave the parade to others. A Frenchman will shed tears over a misfortune; an Englishman labours to conceal the agitations of his mind, and will force a smile upon his cheek, when his inward emotions are those of excessive grief. The former vents his boisterous friendship in a long embrace; the latter shows his cordiality by giving his friend a heartier shake by the hand. Hence it may fairly be inferred, that although the mutual affections between parents and children, are

Digitized by Google

not manifest to every casual observer; yet to such as have an opportunity to observe their character, it is obvious, that this *apparent* coldness is the effect of constitutional prejudice, and has nothing to do with the real sensations by which they are actuated. There are moments, however, in all countries, when the heart opens involuntarily; and those are, perhaps, the most exquisite of our lives."

His remarks on English authors, booksellers, painters, statuaries, and actors, are in general just; but Dr. Johnson is treated with too much contempt, and Peter Pindar with a superabundance of respect. We believe the anecdote is quite new that "the first happy impression made in favour of German productions arose from Mr. Pitt; who, in a very large company, passed a high eulogium on the 'Robbers,' by Schiller; a translation of which he had read with pleasure. This declared opinion gave celebrity to the work, and successive editions were rapidly called for." We suspect that there is about as much truth in this report, as in the notion that prevails (as Mr. Goede tells us in another place) on the continent, that Warren Hastings *bribed the House of Lords to acquit him!**

* In this observation the reviewer betrays either want of knowledge of the facts, or a hightoned party spirit. That the lords received any *direct* bribe, in fact, from Mr. Hastings, was never imagined; but that in their decisions through that remarkable trial they were corruptly influenced is as evident as any moral proposition whatever. That there were very few families in Great Britain of any rank or consequence, who were not in some one or more of their connexions, enriched in India by Mr. Hastings, cannot be denied; and all those in combination formed a body for which justice was no match; according to Father Foigard's logic, this may be argued not to be *a bribe*, but surely it cannot be denied to be *a gratification*. Besides, the king and queen interested themselves warmly in the cause of Hastings, as did all his majesty's ministers, but Mr. Pitt; and the consequence was, that his guilt or innocence became a mere party question, and the trial, a trial rather of strength—than of justice. Thurlow forgetting that he was to sit in that high court as a judge, became a mere advocate; and the archbishop of York, more mindful of the immense wealth, conferred on his son Mr. Markham by Hastings in India, than of truth or justice, went so far as to compare the managers on the trial to Marat and Robespierre. Mr. Pitt, however, differed from their lordships; for when the king proposed to confer a peerage on Warren Hastings, that great personage declared, that such a man as Hastings never should sit in the House of Peers while he was minister; and when the agents of Hastings in the House of Commons op-

Digitized by Google

On the English stage, and the art of acting, the author has expatiated at some length, and has shown more liberality, and more knowledge of the subject, than we usually find in foreigners when they discuss this topic. He is of opinion that the English stage has lost much of its former splendor, and that it is rapidly decaying. The opinions of Dr. Johnson, who, in a former chapter, has been looked upon as the foe of literature, are also supposed to have contributed to the decline of the theatre. Instead of stopping to combat this error, we shall extract the passage in which the author describes the personal requisites of Mr. Kemble and Mr. Cooke. Of these great actors he speaks fully, and very ably.

"The countenance of Kemble is the noblest and most refined; but the muscles are not so much at command as Cooke's are, who is also a first-rate comedian; but Kemble almost wholly rejects the comic muse. Both are most excellent in the gradual changes of the countenance; in which the inward emotions of the soul are depicted and interwoven as they flow from the mind. In this excellence I cannot compare any German actors, whom I have seen, with them, unless it be Issland and Christ; among French tragedians, even Talma and Lafond are far inferior to them."

Again,

"Kemble has a very graceful manly figure, is perfectly well made, and his naturally commanding stature appears extremely dignified in every picturesque position, which he studies most assiduously. His face is one of the noblest I ever saw on any stage, being a fine oval, exhibiting a handsome Roman nose, a well-formed and closed mouth; his fiery and somewhat romantic eyes retreat as it were, and are shadowed by bushy eyebrows; his front is open and little vaulted; his chin prominent and rather pointed; and his features so softly interwoven, that no deeply-marked line is perceptible. His physiognomy, indeed, commands at first sight; since it denotes, in the most expressive manner, a man of refined sentiment, enlightened mind, and correct judgment. Without the romantic look in his eyes, the face of Kemble would be that of a well-bred, cold, and selfish man of the world; but this look, from which an ardent fancy emanates, softens the point of the chin and

posed the vote of thanks to the managers, for their conduct on the trial, Mr. Pitt used in my hearing these words, "The friends of Mr. Hastings will best consult that gentleman's interest and character by observing a profound silence on the subject." [Ed. Mir. of Taste.]

Digitized by Google

the closeness of the mouth. His voice is pleasing, but feeble; of small compass, but extreme depth. This is, as has been previously observed, the greatest natural impediment with which he, to whom nature has been thus bountiful, has still to contend.

"Cooke does not possess the elegant figure of Kemble; but his countenance beams with great expression. The most prominent features in the physiognomy of Cooke are a long and somewhat hooked nose, a pair of fiery and expressive eyes, a lofty and somewhat broad front, and the lines of his muscles which move the lips are pointedly marked. His countenance is certainly not so dignified as that of Kemble, but it discovers greater passion; and few actors are, perhaps, capable of delineating, in more glowing colours, the storm of a violent passion than Cooke. His voice is powerful, and of great compass; a preeminence which he possesses over Kemble, of which he skilfully avails himself. His exterior movements are, by far, inferior in the picturesque to those of Kemble."

From these specimens our readers may form a judgment of the entertainment which these volumes will afford. The style is light and lively, and, among the contents, there is something to please every description of readers. The translation is dedicated to Sir John Carr, the intelligent author of the *Stranger in France*, *Stranger in Ireland*, and several other popular works.

AN ESSAY ON THE RIGHTS OF THE BRUTE CREATION TO TENDERNESS FROM MAN.

I PRESUME there is no *man of feeling*, that has any idea of *justice* but would confess, upon the principles of reason and common *sense* that if he were to be put to *unnecessary* and *unmerited* pain by another man, his tormentor would do him an act of *injustice*; and from a sense of the injustice in his *own* case, now that he is the sufferer, he must naturally infer, that if he were to put another man of feeling, to the same unnecessary and unmerited pain which he now suffers, the injustice in himself to the other, would be exactly the same as the injustice in his tormentor to him. Therefore the man of feeling and justice, will not put another man to unmerited pain; because he will not do that to another, which he is unwilling should be done to himself. Nor will he take any advantage of his own superiority of *strength*, or of the accidents of *fortune*, to abuse them to the oppression of this inferi; because he knows that in the article

Digitized by Google

of *feeling* all men are equal; and that the differences of strength or station are as much the gifts and appointments of God, as the differences of understanding, colour, or stature. Superiority of rank or station may give ability to communicate happiness, (and seems so intended;) but it can give no right to inflict unnecessary or unmerited pain. A *wise* man would impeach his own wisdom, and be unworthy of the blessing of a good understanding, if he were to infer from thence that he had a right to despise or make game of a *fool*, or put him to any degree of pain. The folly of the fool ought rather to excite his compassion, and demands the wise man's care and attention, for one that cannot take care of himself.

It has pleased God, the father of all men, to cover some men with white skins, and others with black skins; but as their is neither merit nor demerit in complexion, the *white* man (notwithstanding the barbarity of custom and prejudice) can have no right, by virtue of his *colour*, to enslave and tyrannize over a *black* man; nor has a *fair* man any right to despise, abuse, and insult a *brown* man. Nor do I believe that a *tall* man, by virtue of his stature has any legal right to trample a *dwarf* under his foot. For whether a man is wise or foolish, white or black, fair or brown, tall or short, and, I might add, *rich or poor*, (for it is no more a man's choice to be poor, than it is to be a fool, or a dwarf, or black or tawney) such he is by God's appointment, and abstractedly considered is neither a subject for pride, nor an object of contempt. Now if amongst men, the differences of their powers of the mind, and of their complexion, stature, and accidents of fortune, do not give to any one man a right to abuse or insult any other man on account of these differences; for the same reason, a man can have no natural right to abuse, and torment a beast merely because a beast has not the *mental* powers of a man. For such as the man is, he is but as God made him; and the very same is true of the beast. Neither of them can lay claim to any intrinsic *merit* for being such as they are; for before they were created it was impossible that either of them could deserve; and at their creation, their shape, perfections, or defects, were invariably fixed, and their bound set which they cannot pass. And being such, neither more nor less than God made them; there is no more demerit in a beast's being a beast, than there is merit in a man's being a man; that is, there is neither merit nor demerit in either of them.

Digitized by Google

A *brute* is an animal no less sensible of pain than a man. He has similar nerves and organs of sensation; and his cries and groans, in case of violent impressions upon his body, though he cannot utter his complaints by speech or human voice, are as strong indications to us of his sensibility of pain, as the cries and groans of a *human* being whose language we do not understand. Now as pain is what we are all averse to, our own sensibility of pain should teach us to commiserate it in others, to alleviate it if possible, but never wantonly or unmeritedly to inflict it. As the differences amongst men in the above particulars are no bars to their feelings, so neither does the difference of the *shape* of a brute from that of a man exempt the brute from feeling; at least, we have no ground to suppose it. But shape or figure is as much the appointment of God, as complexion or stature. And if the difference of complexion or stature does not convey to one man a right to despise and abuse another man, the difference of shape between a man and a brute cannot give to a man any right to abuse and torment a brute. For he that made man and man to differ in complexion or stature, made man and brute to differ in shape and figure. And in this case likewise there is neither merit nor demerit; every creature, whether man or brute, bearing that shape which the supreme wisdom judged most expedient to answer the end for which the creature was ordained.

With regard to the modification of the mass of matter of which an animal is formed, it is *accidental* as to the creature itself; I mean it was not in the power or will of the creature to choose whether it be of one shape or of the other; or whether it be inhabited or animated by the * soul of a brute or the * soul of a man; the substance or matter of which the creature is composed, would be equally susceptible of feeling. It is solely owing to the good pleasure of God that we are created men; or animals in the *shape* of men. For, He that† formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, that he might *become a living soul*, and indued with a sense of feeling, could, if he had so pleased by the same plastic power, have cast the very same *dust* into the mould of a beast; which being animated by the life-giving

* It is of no consequence as to the case now before us, whether the *soul* is, as some think, only a *power*, which cannot exist without the body; or as is generally supposed a *spiritual substance*, that can exist distinct and separate from the body.

† Gen. 2. 7.

Digitized by Google

breath of its Maker, would have become* a *living soul* in that form; and in that form would have been as susceptible of pain, as in the form of a *man*. And if, in *brutal* shape, we had been indued with the same degree of reason and reflection which we now enjoy; and other beings, in *human* shape, should take upon them to torment, abuse, and barbarously ill treat us, because we were not made in their shape; the injustice and cruelty of their behaviour to us would be self-evident; and we should naturally infer, that, whether we walk upon two legs or four; whether our heads are prone or erect; whether we are naked or covered with hair; whether we have tails, or no tails; horns, or no horns; long ears, or short ears; or whether we bray like an ass, speak like a man, whistle like a bird, or are mute as a fish; nature never intended these distinctions as foundations for right of tyranny and oppression. But perhaps it will be said, that it is absurd to make such an inference from a mere supposition that a man might have been a brute, and a brute might have been a man; for, the supposition itself is chimerical and has no foundation in nature; and all arguments should be drawn from fact, and not from fancy of what he might be, or might not be. To this I reply, in few words, and in general; that all cases and arguments, deduced from the important and benevolent precept of *doing unto, as we would be done unto;* necessarily require such kind of *suppositions:* that is, they suppose the case to be *otherwise* than it really is. For instance *a rich man is not a poor man;* yet, the duty plainly arising from the precept is this: the man who is now *rich* ought to behave to the man who is now *poor* in such a manner as the rich man, *if he were poor*, would be willing that the poor man, *if he were rich*, should behave towards him. Here is a case which in fact does not exist between these two men, for the rich man is not a poor man, nor is the poor man a rich man; yet the supposition is necessary to inforce and illustrate the precept; and the reasonableness of it is allowed. And if the supposition is reasonable in one case, it is reasonable, at least not contrary to reason, in all cases to which this general precept can extend, and in which the duty enjoined by it can and ought to be performed. Therefore, though it be true that *a man is not a horse;* yet as a horse is a subject within the extent of the precept; that is, he is capable of receiving benefit by it, the duty enjoined in it extends to the man and amounts to

* Gen. 1. 30.

Digitized by Google

this,—Do you, that *are* a man, so treat your horse *as* you would be willing to be treated by your master *in case* that you *were* a horse. I see no absurdity nor false reasoning in this precept, nor any ill consequence that would arise from it, however it may be gainsayed by the barbarity of custom.

In the case of *human* cruelty,* the oppressed man has a tongue that can plead his own cause, and a finger to point out the aggressor; all men that hear of it shudder with horror; and, by applying the case to themselves, pronounce it *cruelty* with the common voice of humanity, and unanimously join in demanding the punishment of the offender, and brand him with infamy. But in the case of *brutal* cruelty, the *dumb* beast can neither utter his complaints to his own kind, nor describe the author of his wrongs; nor, if he could, have they it in their power to redress and avenge him.

In the case of *human* cruelty there are courts and laws of justice in every civilized society, to which the injured may make his appeal; the affair is canvassed, and punishment inflicted in proportion to the offence. But alas! with shame for man, and sorrow for brutes, I ask the question? What laws are now in force, or what court of judicature does now exist, in which the suffering brute may bring his action against the wanton cruelty of barbarous man? The laws of Triptolemus are long since buried in oblivion, for Triptolemus was but a heathen. No friend, no advocate, not one is to be found amongst the† *bulls nor calves* of the people, to prefer an indictment on behalf of the brute. The priest passeth by on one side, and the Levite on the other side; the Samaritan stands still, sheds a tear, but can no more; for there is none to help: and the poor, wretched, and unbefriended creature is left to mourn in unregarded sorrow, and to sink under the weight of his burthen.

But suppose the law promulgated, and the court erected. The judge is seated, the jury sworn, the indictment read, the cause debated, and a verdict found for the plaintiff. Yet what cost or damage? What recompense for loss sustained? In actions of humanity, with or without law, satisfaction may be made. In various ways you can make amends to a *man* for the injuries you have done him. You know his wants, and you may relieve him. You may give him clothes, or food, or money; you may raise him to a higher station,

* This term the author uses to express the cruelty of men unto men; and that of *brutal* cruelty, to express the cruelty of men unto beasts.

† Psalm 68. 20.

Digitized by Google

and make him happier than before you afflicted him. You may be feet to the lame, and eyes to the blind. You may entertain him, keep him company, or supply him with every comfort, convenience, and amusement of life, which he is capable of enjoying. And thus may you make some atonement for the injury which you have done unto a man; and by thy assiduity and future tenderness, thou mayst perhaps obtain *his* pardon, and palliate thine own offence. But what is all this to the injured *brute?* If by thy passion or malice, or sportive cruelty thou hast broken his limbs, or deprived him of his eyesight, how wilt thou make *him* amends? Thou canst do nothing to amuse him. He wants not thy money nor thy clothes. Thy conversation can do him no good. Thou hast obstructed his means of getting subsistence; and thou wilt hardly take upon thyself the pains and trouble of procuring it for him, (which yet by the rule of justice thou art bound to do.) Thou hast marred his little temporary happiness, which was his all to him. Thou hast maimed or blinded him for ever; and hast done him an *irreparable* injury.

LOVE AND GENIUS.

By a lady, lately resident in this city, but now sojourning in Baltimore.

These few lines are marked by a turn of thought rarely found in little productions of the kind. The mind that produced them has more in it; and we heartily wish it would more liberally deal out its productions to us.

Love meeting Genius t'other day,
(I don't remember in what grove)
Says Genius, "Why now, tell me pray,
So oft you miss your aim, friend Love?"
Says Love, "if I the truth must speak,
My power, without your aid, is weak;
Let Genius but direct my dart,
'Tis sure to pierce the coldest heart."

ROSA.

WEEPING BEAUTY.

From morn to night, or griev'd or glad,
Lucilla's looks are always sad,
Her 'kerchief she with tears is steeping;
Some think the pretty wretch gone mad:
But lately I the reason had—
She looks most beautiful when weeping!

Digitized by Google

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

THEATRICAL JOURNAL.

For April, 1811.

MR. COOKE'S NIGHTS.

1 Monday 1st, Richard the Third—Adopted Child.
2 Wednesday 3d, Man of the World—Weathercock.
3 Friday 5th, King Lear—Sylvester Daggerwood.
4 Saturday 6th, New Way to Pay Old Debts—Killing No Murder.
5 Monday 8th, Henry the Fourth—Of Age To-Morrow.
6 Wednesday 10th, Merchant of Venice—Spoiled Child.
7 Thursday 11th, Macbeth—Too Many Cooks.
8 Saturday 13th, Douglas—Love a la Mode.
9 Monday 15th, Every Man in his Humour—Highland Reel.—For the benefit of Mr. Cooke.

MR. COOKE'S SECOND ENGAGEMENT.

10 Wednesday 17th, King Lear—Modern Antiques.
11 Friday 19th, Man of the World—Prisoner at Large.
12 Saturday 20th, Richard the Third—Scheming Lieutenant.

MR. COOKE'S THIRD ENGAGEMENT. (Playing with Mr. COOPER.)

13 Friday 26th, Othello—Old Maid.
14 Saturday 27th, Gamester—Ways and Means.
15 Monday 29th, Venice Preserved—Don Juan.—For the benefit of Mr. Warren.
16 Tuesday 30th, Othello—Irishman in London.

In the interval between Mr. Cooke's second and third engagements, there were two benefits.

April 22d, Castle Spectre—Lady of the Rock.—Mr. Pullen's benefit.
April 24th, The Robbers—Children in the Wood.—Mr. Calbraith's benefit.

MR. COOKE IN SIR PERTINAX MAC SYCOPHANT.

We are now to accompany Mr. Cooke from his first and second nights, on both of which he performed Richard (playing the second more carelessly and therefore not so well as the first) to his third, on which he performed *Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant*, in Macklin's satirical comedy of The Man of the World, one of the most vigorous dramatic productions of the last century.

Digitized by Google

No man that ever appeared on the British stage, from its first commencement up to the present day, has engaged in a larger share or for a longer time, the attention of the world in which he moved, than Mr. Macklin. As a man, his longevity—as an author, his vigorous intellectual powers,—and as an actor, his genius, science and skill have, for considerably more than half a century, held him up as an object of delight and admiration to all dramatic amateurs, and as a subject of severe examination and manifold critical discussion in the circles of literature. "Sept into this breathing world" under the most unpropitious circumstances of fortune, but with a frame of mind and bodily structure calculated to encounter difficulties, to subdue opposition, and to stem the roughest tides of adversity, he rose superior to the niggard destinies of his birth, and self-taught and self-supported,—owing nothing to the world, or to those that inhabited it,—acquired high renown as an author and an actor, and, as a man, maintained the character of an honest gentleman, and lived, if not in affluence, at least in a genteel competency from the end of the seventeenth century nearly to the beginning of the nineteenth, though not without troubles, probably with less sickness or bodily pain than ever fell to the share of any man who had lived an equal number of days.

Of so very interesting an object as this prime veteran of the stage, it would be unfair not to say something now while we are engaged in describing the great pleasure which, in common with all the good people of this city, we have experienced from the performance of that capital production of his brain, The Man of the World; and though some may cavil at our alluding to any of the circumstances of the author's life, as more properly belonging to biography than criticism, yet as it is our business, in this number, to discuss his merits as a dramatic poet and an actor, and in two several plays to compare him, in the latter department, with the illustrious subject of our present criticism, Mr. Cooke, we think it incumbent on us to advert to those parts of his life and character which are in any way connected with those two productions, or can serve to throw a light upon the motives that actuated him in the composition of Sir Pertinax.

Mr. Kirkman, a very near relation of his, who has written his life, and who, to our knowledge, had access to the most authentic sources of intelligence respecting the birth of the veteran, relates that Charles Macklin was born in the year 1690, and was with his

Digitized by Google

mother, at whose breast he was then a suckling, carried off in a turkish from the field of battle of the Boyne, on the day when the fortune of William gained the final ascendent over James the second, in whose service the father of Macklin, who was a captain of horse, was that day killed, leaving his family a prey to revolutionary rapine and confiscation. In consequence of this melancholy event, Charles was left at a very early age to shift for himself. The play now before us, and Macklin's fame as an actor, preclude the necessity of particularly insisting upon the strength of the boy's genius; since such a play could be the production only of a mind by nature comprehensive, sagacious, penetrating and shrewdly observant of what passed in the world before him. From natural conformation he derived vast powers of imitation; while the spurns, the impositions and the evil treatment which unprovided and unprotected youth is fated to experience from the unworthy, (and unfortunately the unworthy compose a large part of the world) were sure to generate in a heart complexionally proud, stubborn, irrascible and restive, a sufficient share of spleen to quicken imagination, to give edge to his satirical talents, and at an early age to call forth his mimicry and ridicule into exercise. Accordingly we find that the first object upon which he vented his splenetic humour and displayed his talents was a schoolmaster at Islandbridge near Dublin, to whom he was a short time sent by his mother to learn reading and writing, and who, partly in consideration of his helpless condition, and partly because the child was bred a Roman catholic, treated him with cruel, and as the old man often said, unexampled severity. This pedant, who, like Gil Blas's uncle, was one of the most expert floggers in the world, maintained a kind of warfare with the boy, in which the one probably inflicted as much mental as the other did bodily pain, the latter returning scarification with ridicule and mimicry, and the former rejoining again with scarification till they separated in the usual way—the boy eloping and running away to England.

It so happened that this pedagogue knew as well as any of his fraternity how to shape the treatment of his pupils to his own interest, and always had as large a stock of fawning fondness and adulation at hand for the children of the opulent, as of birch and abuse for those of the indigent and distressed, insomuch that, as the veteran used to say, an acquaintance of only a week's standing with him would enable the dullest blockhead to ascertain by his treat-

Digitized by Google

ment of each of his scholars, the exact amount, even to a pound sterling a year, of the father's income. Not a tittle of this was lost upon young Macklin, who to a quick perception of the ridiculous in mankind, joined a bold, turbulent, intrepid spirit, and a violent abhorrence of whatever was mean or base; and Nicholson, for so the master was called, had the mortification to see and hear himself caricatured in the mimicry, and satirized with the wit of the boy whom he had exasperated with his insult and contempt. Nicholson and his wife were both natives of Scotland, and Macklin acquired the Scottish tone and dialect so completely, and mimicked both man and woman so exactly that they had frequently to go up and down stairs, at each other's supposed call, when it was only Charles, who over and over again deceived them; and sometimes they had the misery to hear the school room in a roar of laughter, at the unlucky boy's mimicry of the old fellow, stroking down and sleeking the hair of some of the scholars and domning the blude of others, according to the goodness of their clothes, or the rank or means of their parents. In this Macsycophant of humble life, the thickest sight may perceive the germ of that high court Macsycophant, who has for many years convulsed with laughter the audiences of London, Dublin and Edinburgh, and on this season backed by the astonishing acting of their favourite Cooke, so excessively delighted the people of America. In every country, and every department of life Macsycophants may be found, but the original object of Macklin's antipathy being a native of Scotland, he naturally chose to make his dramatic character a North Briton, and being in heart a passionate whig, he as naturally took aim at that court cabal headed by lord Bute, which every whig abhorred and every honest man must for ever execrate.

A single anecdote will be sufficient to display the temper, feelings and opinions of Macklin on the subject of politics. During the American war, being at Nando's coffeehouse, he got engaged in a warm discussion with one of those court zealots who then haunted all the public places in London and every other town and city in Great Britain. The crime of rebellion having been several times applied with particular acrimony to the colonists, Macklin undertook to prove that the Americans did not strictly fall within the meaning of the term, and to that end he entered into a learned definition of the word. This led to a deep argument in which his adversary happening to give the authority of a learned

Digitized by Google

professor in Glasgow who was his friend and tutor, Macklin started, and in an affected tone of surprise and regret, exclaimed "Then you are a Scotchman sir!"—"I have that honour sir," replied the other.—"Bless me, bless me," returned the veteran, "what a blunder I have made!—I beg your pardon sir, I most humbly beg your pardon;—I am sure if I had known you were a Scotchman, I should not have been so cruel, or so rude as to have defined rebellion in your presence."

Though loyal upon principle, and devoted to the British constitution, Macklin was all his life a zealous friend to liberty, and venerating the sovereign of Great Britain, abhorred the corruption of his ministers. Not long before the veteran died, he attended to give his vote at the Westminster election. When he mounted the Hustings, the candidates on both sides received him with marked respect and veneration, and the crowd hailed him with shouts and plaudits. He then advanced forward and addressed the people thus. "I was born in that propitious year when the sun of liberty first rose with its *orange* beams on Great Britain—I have lived to see it run its summer's day of splendour, and I am not without my fears that, old as I am, I shall live to see it set. I pray to God that I may die before that time: But while I live I will do my best to retard it, and therefore give my vote for Mr. Fox." In these few statements, the reader will discern the principles and spirit which actuated the author of the Man of the World, and which dictated the bold, ingenious, and animated satire, as well as the exalted political sentiments with which that comedy is so richly fraught. In sir Pertinax the author has accurately pourtrayed the principles and general character of the Bute faction, as in Egerton he has depicted those of its adversaries.

We own that it has made us smile to hear certain curious, censorial observations which have been thrown out on the Man of the World in this country since the acting of Cooke first raised it to its present importance. The stream of cheap and officious humanity which first sprung from that precious fountain of godly goodness, the French revolution, still continues to trickle through every thing about us; the hypocritical cant of pity, fraternity, liberality and candour is ready at every idle gossip's hand, upon every occasion; each new incident that occurs serves to awaken some tender gratuitous care for the welfare of those who feel no such care for themselves; and persons who could eat their din-

Digitized by Google

ners without the defalcation of a mouthful, if intelligence arrived that the island of Great Britain, North and South, was sunk and "in the deep bosom of the ocean buried," have lately felt the pinfeathers of their candour rise erect at the injuries done to the Scottish nation by this wicked play; a high compliment no doubt to the people of Edinburgh and Glasgow, by whom sir Pertinax is as much relished, at least, as he ever was by those of London or Dublin, Philadelphia or New York. The fact is, that all but the grossly ignorant view it, *not as a national invective but as an excellent political satire.* In no part of the world are the principles on which it is founded more firmly and rationally upheld than in Scotland—in no part is there a more lively contempt and abhorrence entertained for that kind of character which Macklin has pourtrayed in sir Pertinax. We are supported in this assertion by the simple fact, apparent upon the theatrical chronicles of England, that Cooke visits Scotland periodically, as Macklin did before him, to gratify the people of that country with his performance of the Man of the World, and of sir Archy Mac Sarcasm.

That this comedy was, from its first appearance before the public, viewed in the light of a mere political satire appears from the circumstances attending the original performance of it on the stage. The author conscious of his own purposes, and fearful of the fangs of the law, of the power of the lord chamberlain, and even of the strength which the court faction might have in the audience, prudently declined bringing it forward on the London stage, till the elevation of Mr. Pitt to the office of prime minister brought about a ministerial reformation and bruised the head of the court snake. This event promised to be favourable to the reception of the Man of the World, and Macklin ventured to bring it out to public view at Covent Garden. As the corruption and the vices it was aimed at were expected to be no longer "the mode at court," it was concluded that the exposure of them could neither subject the author to any legal penalty, nor give offence to those in power; while the old faction, who could alone feel or take offence at it, would in all probability, for their own sakes, avoid expressing a resentment, which would only evince that they felt the soreness of guilt, expose the impotence of their resentment, and of course subject them to the derision and still greater dislike of the public.

The old man was perfectly correct in his calculations. Some opposition was made on the first night—a few of that vile tribe, com-

Digitized by Google

pounds of stupidity, cowardice and malice; half snake, half gander, the HISSERS, exposed their forked tongues and brainless heads —(a miserable discontented minority such as frequently disturb our theatre) but were soon put down, as indeed the same class of troublesome nonentities ought to be put down among us. The comedy passed through its ordeal with thunders of applause, and continued to be acted as long as Macklin was able to perform sir Pertinax. Of his property in this play and in his "Love à la Mode" the old gentleman was exceedingly jealous and strict; never failing to resort to a court of law for a prohibition, whenever either of them was attempted to be acted. Since his death, the property having become public, Cooke has assumed the two parts with such success that his performance was at once considered as equal to that of the author; and for a long time past he has been allowed, even by the most partial admirers of the deceased veteran, to be much superior to Macklin in the personification of both. Of the powers of Cooke a stronger proof cannot be adduced than this singular fact. It was universally believed that sir Pertinax and sir Archy would die along with Macklin; and indeed it was natural enough to think so; for his excellence in both characters was so great that the imagination could scarcely figure to itself any thing more perfect, till Cooke appeared, who, by the superiority of his performance has afforded us a salutary lesson against overweening confidence in our opinions, and taught us how vain and presumptuous it is for any man dogmatically to lay it down that a thing is impossible, only because he himself cannot form a conception of its existence.

The original name of this comedy, and under which it had, for many years before its appearance on the stage of the metropolis of England, been performed in Dublin with unbounded applause, was, "*The true born Scotchman.*" There we first saw it; and certainly had we not since seen Cooke, we should have thought any man's attempting it an act of rashness, if not presumption. Cooke's delineation of it, however, convinced us that we were a great way out in our calculation.

Of a performance, no one part of which falls short of positive excellence, to particularize any passage as most deserving of praise may seem nugatory; yet we find ourselves irresistibly tempted to avow our opinion that Cooke's manner of relating the process of industrious sycophancy by which he rose from his "*beggarly clerkship in Sawney Gordon's counting house*" to his present rank, opu-

Digitized by Google

lence and importance, is the very finest specimen of natural, yet bold and vigorous comic acting and speaking, that was ever presented on any stage. His description of that *shrivelled, cadaverous neglected piece of deformity, in the shape of an eezard, or an epperciand*, whom he married for her wealth, together with his account of her death, were prominently beautiful. The manner in which he said, "*Ase soon ase I found she had the siller, aha! gude truith I plump'd mee doon upo' doun close by her, cheek by jole, and I sung, and I sighed, and I groaned as vehemently ase she could do for the life of her; ay, and I turned up the whites of my een, till the strings awmost crack'd again: I watch'd her attentively, handed her till her chair; waited on her hame, and got most releegiously intimate wi' her*," was in the richest vein of genuine, chaste, comic humour; but when, his face glowing with exultation, with drolling self-applause and at the same time with earnest importance, he drew up his chair close to Egerton, by way of inforcing his description, and continued, "*I married her in a week; I buried her in a fortnight; in a month I touched her siller; and wi' a deep suit of mourning, a sorrowful veesage, and a joyful heart, I began the world again*," there was a full luxuriance of expression, without the slightest trespass upon nature, which we think may fairly be set down as the acme of perfection in the personification of character, and leaves all competitors, dead or living, as far below, as the eagle in his highest flight leaves "the crows and choughs that wing the midway air."

Without having ever seen Mr. Garrick, we cannot help inferring from the excellencies which Cooke possesses, in common with that great man (according to general report of him) that the natural genius of the latter is nearly akin to that of the former, abstracted from any imitation. The comedy of Cooke is as completely distinct from his tragedy, as if they were the workings of two separate men: And this was certainly one of Mr. Garrick's excellencies. We have heretofore made the same remark upon Hodgkinson, who, inferior though he was to either of those great men in tragic exhibition, had not only more generality and diversity than any other person, but marked his comedy and tragedy with expressions so very distinct that no one could have imagined them to be the offspring of the same parent.

It would be injustice to Mr. Cooke, and to ourselves, to let our rapturous enjoyment of the passages above quoted render us forgetful of the innumerable beauties he disclosed in the other

Digitized by Google

scenes. In his tyrannical, dictatorial conduct to his son Egerton—in his treacherous professions, his fawning servility, his abject adulation, and at the same time in his inflexible, tenacious self-interested dealing with lord Lumbercourt, (the *suaviter in modo* & *fortiter in re*, so much recommended by lord Chesterfield)—in his malignant joy upon discovering the supposed intrigue of Constantia, and in his mortification when she is proved to be innocent, he was uniformly perfect in conception, and forcible in execution. His manner of uttering "*the clearing* up of this wench's virtue is dom'd unlucky! I'm afraid it will ruin all our affairs," will not be forgotten in Philadelphia while any of those live who witnessed it. Macklin's inferiority to Cooke consisted in this, that he was less plausible in his flattery of the peer, less versatile, and infinitely less insinuating. The inflexible hardness of his features, the loud sepulchral hollowness of his voice, rendered lord Chesterfield's *suaviter in modo* difficult to him. He must be a foolish lord Lumbercourt indeed who could swallow flattery from the stubborn, unbending, iron face and deportment of old Macklin; but in Cooke's aspect there was nothing to impair probability, while every turn of sir Pertinax, met ample correspondence from the admirable versatility of his features, utterance and action. In a word, as we never have seen, so we think it very unlikely that we ever shall again see a piece of comic acting so free from faults and so replete with excellencies as Mr. Cooke's sir Pertinax Macsycophant.

Having given our sentiments upon this great actor in sir Pertinax, we should close the article, if we had not accidentally met with a passage in a respectable critical publication printed at London, which speaks so correctly as well as pleasantly of both the play and the actor, and proves so indisputably the high professional estimation in which Cooke is held in London, that we think it well worth subjoining, as a part and indeed a very interesting part of the same subject.

"Mr. Cooke, returned from his *travels*, made his first appearance this season in Macklin's Sir Pertinax Macsycophant. The many rumours of his sufferance by spirits and bailiffs, "*his disastrous chances of moving accidents by flood—of hairbreadth 'scapes—of being taken by the insolent foe, and——redemption thence*," seemed to have such an effect on the audience that they really appeared the more to *love him for the dangers he had pass'd*, and with, not

Digitized by Google

three, but six rounds of applause, greeted his return. Such a house has not been seen, since *the little hour of little Betty*. Towards the end of the second act, he showed symptoms of a cold, but he recovered himself, and on the whole drew a masterly picture of the Scottish Sycophant, all pride and meanness—impudence and servility.—And when he is himself, no stage exhibition can hope for more perfection from the deliberative and executive powers of man. We fear indeed, that this likeness is seen (according to the motto) *veluti in speculum*, and we are surprised that while it is such a national reflection on those who number so strong in the management of state affairs, the manœuvres and machinations of which are also so grossly exposed, we are surprised, we say, that the license is still extended to its representation. JOHN BULL's perpetual roar of enjoyment on the occasion is not much unlike the delight which a maniac takes in the rattling of his chains. Of Mr. Cooke's imprudence, until WE again suffer by it, we shall say no more. As it respects himself it carries its own punishment along with it. Viewing him on all sides, his *failings* and his *vast merits*, we are tempted to exclaim with Chesterfield of lord Bolingbroke, "*What can we say but—Alas, poor Human Nature!*"

We venture to predict that Mr. Cooke's first return to the London audience will be greeted with such welcomes as no actor ever before received, and perhaps with more overflowing houses. Yet it is *here* we wish him to be; and we much doubt whether here he ought not to be, and will not yet wish himself. Did not connecting circumstances supersede private inclination, it is likely enough that he is, even now, of our opinion. He may in England have greater numbers because larger theatres to applaud him, as an actor; (we defy them to applaud him more,) but as a man, he cannot in the nature of things have so many elegant, steady, and cordial friends, of high character, quality, connexions, and opulence, to make his life at once pleasant and respectable, as he leaves behind him in Philadelphia.

MR. COOKE IN SHYLOCK.

WE scarcely know a drama which affords a greater scope for disquisition, critical as well as historical, than this of THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. To neglect the qualities of the play while we investigate the merits of the actor would be but half doing our duty. When a person reads a play of Shakspeare's, he should look

Digitized by Google

upon himself as a commentator bound in respect to himself to investigate the faults and beauties of the work, to make a fair estimate of the author's merits, to discover as far as possible his excellencies, and at the same time to guard himself against being blinded by extravagant admiration. When a person sees a play of Shakspeare acted by a great and truly philosophic actor like Cooke, he may consider himself as listening to a production of the greatest genius that ever existed, elucidated by the practical and intellectual observations of one of the ablest commentators that lives. The object of the dramatic critic should be to unite both, and not only to join his commentaries with those of the actor in illustration of the poet's design; but to point out to his reader how far the author is indebted to the actor for the elicitation of beauties which before lay concealed, and how much of the merit of the performance of the latter may reasonably be ascribed to the genius and composition of the former.

It derogates nothing from the merit of Shakspeare that he has borrowed many of the fables and incidents of his plays from old ballads and traditionary stories; while on the other hand his adherence to them may be considered as an apology for many of the anomalies, the useless outrages on the unities, and the improbabilities which deface his plots. From the *Gesta Romanorum*—from Hollingshed's chronicles, and from the works of the Italian novelists, most of those plots are taken either immediately, or else circuitously through other writers. That the story of the Merchant of Venice is founded in fact there is every reason to believe. Doctor Johnson observes, it had been discovered that the fable is taken from a story in the *Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, a novelist who wrote in 1378, translated into English, and that the translator of it was of opinion that the story of the caskets was taken from *Boccace*, both of which the doctor abridged: nevertheless the Doctor says, he believes that Shakspeare had some other novel in view. Steevens says that it appears from a passage in Gosson's *School of Abuse* (1579) that a play, comprehending the distinct plots of Shakspeare's Merchant of Venice, had been exhibited long before our great bard commenced a writer, the name of which was "*The Jew shown at the Bull, representing the greediness of worldly chooserc, and the bloody minds of usurers.*"

It is astonishing to think how universally this extraordinary story has been known for many ages, and in how many countries

Digitized by Google

it has been related, to how many authors it has been ascribed, and in how many different shapes, of novel, ballad, and drama, it has been published.

In the *Gesta Romanorum*, now among the Harleian manuscripts, the story is found under the title of "*The Bond;*" of which a translation into old English was made, first printed by Wynkyn de Worde, and was extremely popular; and as Shakspeare's play contains certain parts of it verbatim, an inference is drawn thence that it was from it he borrowed the Merchant of Venice.

In Doctor Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, there is a song which bears the name of "*Gernutus the Jew of Venice*," and a ballad intitled "*The murderous life and terrible death of the rich Jew of Malta.*"

Doctor Farmer states that in the manuscript of one Lidgate, belonging to Dr. Askew, he found a *Tale of two Merchants of Egypt and of Bagdad.*

The fable of the caskets is taken from a separate story.

In a book called "The Orator," translated from the French by Launcelot Pilot, Declamation the 95th is "*Of a Jew who would for his debt have a pound of the flesh of the Christian;*" in this the christian's answer is circumstantially detailed.

Gregorio Leti, in his life of Pope Sixtus Quintus, tells the story but with the leading fact reversed, making the wicked offender a christian and the object of malice a Jew. Now Leti was a christian, was educated among the jesuits, and was not likely to take that side of the story, if he had not some proofs which to him appeared authentic.

And in a Persian manuscript in the possession of a captain Munas, in the East India Company's service at Tanjore, the same story is related to have passed in Syria between a Jew and mussulman.

Baker says, that the fable of the Merchant of Venice is founded on a fact which happened in some part of Italy; but with this difference that the intended cruelty was really on the side of the christian, the Jew being the unhappy delinquent who fell beneath his rigid and barbarous resentment. It has been well observed that this, if true, is a good exemplification of the fable of the lion and the painter. Had a Jew been the dramatist it would have been otherwise.

These various stories, which are truly interesting, shall in future numbers appear in our miscellany. Mean time we will address our-

Digitized by Google

selves to *our* Shylock, his author and his representative,—to Shakspeare and to Cooke.

Many of our readers will be astonished when we candidly avow our opinion, that unjustifiable as revenge is on christian and on moral principles, and bloody and inexorable as is the heart of Shylock, it neither appears to us so unnatural, nor is his resentment, in our opinion, of such unmixed enormity as spectators and readers in general think it. If indeed Shylock be that monster, which we firmly believe the world never saw, "*nulla virtute redemptum*," no candid casuist will say that he is "*nulla injuria redemptum.*" Though his revenge is abominable, it appears by his own showing, and the admission of his enemies, that his wrongs have been extreme and his provocations manifold and vexatious, and the more extreme and vexatious because extended to his whole nation, and wreaked upon them for their adherence to their religious faith, in which, whether that faith be orthodox or wrong, their sincerity ought to protect them from sanguinary persecution. Shall we own it?—though hating the Jew through four acts, we never could withhold our pity from him in the conclusion.

Shakspeare having taken up the story on the side most favourable to popularity, and perhaps most congruous with his own opinion respecting the fact, not contented with the naked story as delivered down to him, resolved to enhance its enormity, and has omitted no one circumstance which can tend to blacken the character of Shylock and render it disgraceful to that body of human creatures to which it is supposed to belong. For this purpose he begins by erecting a contrast to the selfishness, cruelty and subtlety of Shylock, in the ardent friendship, the placid benevolence, and the generous nature of Antonio, whom he introduces first to the audience for the purpose of inlisting their prepossessions in his favour. When Shylock appears, the first words he utters mark that character so hateful, though necessary, to man, *the Usurer;* and the cautious calculation with which he ponders on the risk of crediting Antonio, speaks the coldness and hardness of his heart, while his baseness, his vindictiveness and his hypocrisy are brought out in glowing colours by the hatred he expresses (aside) to Antonio, contrasted with his fairfaced fawning professions of kindness to the same object.

> How like a fawning publican he looks!
> I hate him, for he is a christian;

Digitized by Google

But more, for that, in low simplicity,
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance with us here in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
HE HATES OUR ANCIENT NATION; and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well won thrift,
Which he calls interest.—Cursed be my tribe
If I forgive him!

Now, if hating his nation, and reviling him personally, be not motives to dislike, we know not what can be; and we find that Antonio, so far from denying or apologizing for his unjust and evil treatment of the Jew, owns it, boasts of it, and avows that he will do it again.

Signior Antonio, many a time, and
Oft on the Rialto, have you rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is my own.
Well then, it now appears, you want my help:
Go to then: you come to me and you say,
Shylock, we would have moneys; you say so:
You that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me, as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I say
"Hath a dog money?—Is it possible
"A cur can lend three thousand ducats?"—or
Shall I bend low, and, in a bondman key,
With bated breath, and whispering humbleness,
Say this,—"Fair sir, you spit upon me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me—dog. And for these courtesies,
I'll lend you thus much moneys.

Shakspeare, though intent upon exaggerating the wickedness of the Jew and making Antonio personally amiable, seems not less desirous to expose the persecuting spirit which so long abused and disgraced the professors of our divine religion;—

Digitized by Google

and to mark its effects as more dire and pernicious, he enslaves to it a man eminently possessed of the most lovely virtues—of friendship, justice, generosity, and a kind affectionate heart; over whom it has such perfect dominion that in the fulness of his hatred to the sect, he uses the most foul and provoking terms of abuse in answer to the Jew's humble expostulation, and that too while begging a favour from him.

> ANTONIO. I am like to call thee so again;
> *To spit on thee again*—to spurn thee too.

A friend of ours, whose ingenuity we have frequent occasion to admire, not long ago censured Shylock's charge and Antonio's acknowledgment of spitting on the Jew as unnatural and too low for a christian gentleman. Now, as others may have conceived the same objection, we will, in order to obviate it, state a few facts which came to our knowledge during a compulsory residence of near two years in Spain as a prisoner of war. Among that superstitious people thousands of fanatical opinions prevail, and thousands of ridiculous legends are circulated and most piously believed, of which few in Great Britain or America have so much as heard. One of these is, that on account of the Jews spitting upon our Saviour at his crucifixion, it was from that time forth ordained that no Jew should ever spit out, and that, for the more certainly carrying this inhibition into effect, the whole nation are rendered physically incapable of ejecting their spittle; while on the contrary it is piously believed to be the duty of a good christian to spit upon every Jew. From this it results that Spaniards feel such an abhorrence of being spit upon, that few of them would fail to return it on the spot with death. "Do you take me for a Jew?" would be the word, and the word would be followed with the knife or stiletto. Shakspeare, therefore, is no less accurate in this part than he is in the characteristic conduct of almost all the persons of his dramas.

We cannot refrain from relating a fact that came within our own knowledge, as it serves to show the state of persecution under which this unfortunate portion of our fellow beings groan, even in England. Some years ago the writer of this bought, of a Jew who lived by making Morocco chamber slippers, two pair, as he was hawking them through the streets of London. Not having silver enough to pay for them, he offered him half a guinea, and desired

Digitized by Google

him to give him the difference. This was at the shop door of an eminent mercer's in the strand. The poor Israelite timid from persecution and a sense of the inequality of his condition, and rendered cautious by the evils experienced every day by his tribe, refused to touch the half guinea, but begged this writer to throw it down on the counter, and let the mercer first see it. Being interrogated as to the motives of this caution, he replied, that if the half guinea happened to be a bad one, and it became a matter of contest, nothing he could say in his own defence would acquit him of the fraud, or save him from the punishment annexed to it.

In this act of the Merchant of Venice there is nothing of that vehement passion necessary to elicit the higher powers of Cooke. But even in this, he was here eminently great: we have seen him more so; but still he was Cooke, even here. We own that we were disappointed in one passage, because in departing from his original reading in London, he omitted one of the most prominent of the many beauties we had discovered in him, and one which we were, before he came, in the habit of particularly describing to our friends on this side the Atlantic. Instead of saying as others do, and as he was used to do, to our great suprise and regret he read

Many a time and oft,
On the Rialto you have rated me,—

he formerly read it thus,

Many a time—and oft
On the Rialto—you have rated me.

The latter reading we think exquisitely beautiful and judicious; not only because it gets rid of a vulgarism, to wit, the old woman's phrase when telling her story of "*many a time and oft*," but because by making the offence as committed *oft on the Rialto*, he inhances the magnitude of the injury done him by Antonio. As if he had said, by transposition, "*Many a time you have rated me, and what made it worse, often on the Rialto*,"—*on change*,—*in the great place of business*. This too exactly corresponds with his previous charge,

And he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well won thrift.

Yet we have never seen the charges of the Jew half so well or pointedly sent home; never his hypocrisy so forcibly or judiciously

Digitized by Google

marked; never the feigned friendship and simulated good temper so admirably hit off as when he says,

> Why, look you, how you storm;
> I would be friends with you, and have your love!

and, above all, we think that the exclamation of

> O father Abraham! what these christians are,
> Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
> The thoughts of others,—

never was uttered any thing approaching to equal felicity, by MACKLIN, HENDERSON, MOSSOP, or even SHERIDAN, who, in this act of Shylock, greatly surpassed the other three.

In the soliloquy which Shylock speaks apart,

> "How like a fawning publican he looks!" &c.—

Macklin took the lead of all men that ever lived: there was an expression of implacable heart-seated vindictiveness, a savage, brutal, gloomy ferocity marked in the saturnine countenance and sepulchral voice of Macklin, which rendered his utterance of the two lines,

> If I can catch him once upon the hip,
> I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him,—

more hateful, and terrible than those who have not seen the man and heard him utter them, can possibly imagine.

(To be continued.)

THE KNIGHT OF SNOWDOWN.

A New Musical Drama.

UPON a story in Scott's beautiful poem, THE LADY OF THE LAKE, a musical play has been constructed called the Knight of Snowdown, which was performed in London, for the first time in the beginning of last February. To every one who had perused that beautiful poem (and what person of taste had not?) the title of the play was a sufficient intimation of its origin. The advertisement of it no sooner appeared therefore, than the most lively curiosity pervaded London, and the house was filled with people anxiously expecting to see one of the most interesting stories of the Lady of the Lake presented to the eye and the ear as well as the understanding with every charm

Digitized by Google

which a dramatic form could lend it. Nor were they disappointed; since, if we may credit the reports of the London publications, no play that has for a long time appeared, received or merited more applause. One critic speaks of it to this effect:

No story in poetical romance, even without excepting any of the former productions of this distinguished writer, is more formed to win and rivet the attention, none more suitable to the wildness and irregularity of the modern drama. We find in his pages as perfect a description of all the striking peculiarities of feudal manners, and of the lofty and imposing pride of chivalry, as it is possible to furnish, unimbodied, to the eye of the inquirer, and it was natural to suppose, that when cast into a dramatic form, and aided by the preparation and embellishments of a theatre, it must afford a living picture, admirable for its precision, and interesting for its general character.

Such is the musical farce before us, the success of which was proportioned to its merits. There are of course some deviations from the original, but they are fewer than might have been expected and were rendered absolutely necessary, by the narrowness of the limits allowed to the drama: with these exceptions, the author has scrupulously adhered to the great original.

Nothing, it is said, could surpass the charming effect produced in representation, by the sudden and unexpected appearance of Roderick Dhu's host, when, on sounding his bugle, the whole martial clan obedient to their chieftain's call, started into sight from the concealment in which they lay in the obscurity of the forest. Never did theatrical contrivance, elicit a more loud or lasting burst of admiration.

Of the musical part it is impossible to say too much in praise. The composer has done every thing for it, that taste, genius and science could achieve. The overture inspired the house with a delight which continued, rather with increase than diminution, to the end of the piece. The old Scottish airs so universally admired for their sweetness and vivacity are imitated with unusual felicity—and altogether there has seldom if ever been a stronger instance of the fascination of the mind by the delightful illusions of the senses.

To complete the whole, the scenery is said to have been beyond all former example exquisitely beautiful, and to reflect no less credit on the painter, than does the music on the composer.

Digitized by Google

THE FINE ARTS.

It is pleasing to remark, as it affords, perhaps, the least dubious proof of our progress in refinement, that of late a very eager attention has been directed in certain sections of the United States to the cultivation and improvement of the liberal arts.

Eminently conspicuous by the variety and splendour of her public institutions, the city of Philadelphia, as was to be anticipated, has taken the lead in this new and glorious career of distinction. By the contributions of private individuals, we have now erected an academy of the fine arts, which if sustained by the same generous and enlightened spirit that founded it, may, at no distant period, challenge a comparison with some of the similar institutions of Europe.* As a school of the arts, this establishment promises to be productive of the most important results. Containing some of the finest models in painting and statuary, it cannot fail indeed to correct the taste, and to discipline the rising genius of the country. But in another view, its utility has already been very distinctly evinced. By holding out to professional artists an appropriate apartment for the display of their productions, it has served to kindle that species of honourable competition which excites to the highest exertion of the powers, and it furnishes, what to them is a not less interesting consideration, the means of effecting a prompt and advantageous sale for their works.

We have recently surveyed with sensations of unmixed delight, the first annual exhibition of the academy. To one less conversant than ourselves with the just pretensions of many of the American artists, the collection of admirable paintings and engravings presented on this occasion, would indeed be matter of surprise.

Through the courtesy of a friend we hope soon to be able to enrich the pages of our journal with a detailed and critical account of this exhibition, so creditable to the talents of the artist, and the munificence of the patron.

* We understand that the suggestion of founding this academy came originally from Mr. Hopkinson, and that our city is indebted, in an eminent degree, for this monument of her taste and liberality, to the ardent and persevering exertions of that gentleman. Whoever wishes to learn more of the history of this establishment, or delights in an eloquence pure and animated, should peruse the discourse lately delivered before the academy by Mr. Hopkinson.

Digitized by Google

But we cannot delay a moment in calling the attention of the public to the productions of a very extraordinary youth who has arisen among us. The portrait of Mr. Cooke in the character of Richard which is here prefixed, is one of several of that celebrated actor, in different characters, drawn by Master CHARLES LESLIE, of this city, who has scarcely yet entered his sixteenth year!!

It is our intention to have the whole of this valuable series engraved in the best manner by Mr. EDWIN, and to present them to our subscribers in the ensuing numbers of the Mirror.

Of these spirited and accurate delineations little need be said in praise by us. They are *living pictures*, and will speak for themselves. By the united voice of all who have seen them, they are pronounced to be among the happiest efforts of the pencil in this rare and difficult department of the art. What, however, adds much to the merit of the execution, is, that they were done from recollection, without the benefit of a sitting; a circumstance which alike illustrates the singular aptitude of the artist, and the wonderfully impressive and characteristic style of Mr. Cooke's playing.

Nor should it be concealed that the habitual pursuits of Master LESLIE have been altogether alien from the path to which nature seems to have destined him, and that his excellence as a painter is wholly due to the energetic impulses of a GENIUS, HITHERTO UNFOSTERED, UNSUSTAINED, UNINVIGORATED, and UNTUTORED.

Besides the portrait of Mr. Cooke, in the character of Richard, from the pencil of that wonderful boy, young LESLIE, we present our readers with a fine likeness of Mr. Cooke in his own proper person. The picture from which this engraving is taken holds a distinguished rank among those productions of Mr. Sully which enrich our exhibition, and reflect so much credit on that admirable artist. To Mr. Benjamin Wilcox, whose property the picture is, we are indebted for the privilege of having it engraved: and to Mr. Edwin for what we consider as one of the finest specimens of his skill.

Thus we have discharged our due to our subscribers. We owed them a print for the number of last December, and we have paid it with an admirable likeness of the greatest of actors.

Digitized by Google

THE

MIRROR OF TASTE

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

VOLUME III.] MAY, 1811. [NUMBER V.

HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 212.]

WE are now entering upon the most splendid and delightful part of the history of the French stage, which but opened upon our view in the last number. Of the multitude of satellites who accompanied the great luminary of dramatic poetry in France, CORNEILLE, in his rising, we have said as much as they deserve on their own account, and should therefore dismiss them, if occasional circumstances in the history of some of them, were not too intimately blended with incidents in the life of Corneille to be left unnoticed. The names of those persons, therefore, wherever they occur, hereafter, are to be considered merely as appendages to the more important subject, introduced for the purpose of illustrating it.

The lives of poets are seldom checkered with particular incidents. While the busy world is running its daily round, they get out of the circle; and, while from a distance they view its career, survey the "mighty maze, and expatiate freely o'er this scene of man," rarely become actors in it, take a personal share in its vicissitudes, or stand a chance of encountering those singular adventures

Digitized by Google

which give such an interesting variety to the lives of those who are actively engaged in the practical business of the world. For a man of such great celebrity, the particulars of Corneille's life are rather circumscribed, and belong rather to his professional pursuits than to himself—to the poet rather than to the man; so that in truth the detail of his life is more a history of his dramatic career and successes than the biography of Peter Corneille.

We have already mentioned that this great man was born in 1606. His first dramatic production of note appeared in 1626. He was then, of course, only nineteen years of age: and his *Melite* (that was the name of the piece) was begotten in the very arms of Romance. His genius, too elevated and enlarged for the study of the law, to which he was destined, frequently disclosed itself in small matters at a very early age, but exhibited so little of any particular tendency that nobody could conjecture what the bent of it was likely to be, nor was he himself perceived to feel any partial bias to the employment of it. The fire lay dormant, and only waited for the breath that was to blow it into a flame—the breath of love, which even at the tender age of seventeen or eighteen roused him into action, and spurred him forward into that career of glory which he was destined by nature to run. This love affair was marked by a singularity of circumstance which claims particular observation: and, as the world is indebted to an affair of gallantry for the comedy of Melite, it would be unpardonable in us to omit so interesting a circumstance in the history of the stage.

A young gentleman, an intimate friend of our poet, was paying his addresses to a young lady with whom he was deeply in love, fondly imagining that his passion was returned. Being desirous to have the opinion of a person on whose taste he knew he could depend, and upon the sincerity of whose friendship he thought he could safely rely, respecting a subject so important as marriage, and a person so very dear to his heart as his *chere amie*, he brought Corneille to visit the young lady and introduced him to her in form. From that moment the fate of the unhappy lover, of Corneille, and of *Melite*, was decided: the lady fell in love with our young poet, and, without compunction or reserve, made choice of him, and rejected the lover. Dazzled by a compliment so flattering to his personal vanity, and charmed with the beauty and of course with the superior discernment of the person who had unsolicited given him the preference, Corneille became forgetful of his honour,

Digitized by Google

and treacherously agreed to supplant the man who confided in him. This was a sorry deed; but the world readily overlooked a crime to which the emancipation of such a genius as Corneille from the trammels of the law was to be ascribed—*Melite* appeared and gave delight, and the culprit was forgiven. The discarded lover's rage was levelled at the perfidious girl, who was certainly most to blame, and who from that time went at Rouen by no other name than that of *Melite*. But the public acknowledged the highest obligations to her, and from that time were inspired with a passion and a just taste for dramatic entertainments, till before then unknown to them.

Though the merits of this first production were certainly great, and were universally acknowledged to be so, it was objected to it, that the interest was enfeebled by too much simplicity. To counterbalance that cause of complaint, Corneille wrote a play called *Clitandre*. This second piece was a tragi-comedy; and here, in endeavouring to shun Sylla he fell into Charybdis: for *Clitandre* was still more extravagant than *Melite* was simple, and Corneille lost much in the public estimation. It happened too that Routrou, of whom mention has already been made, had about two years before brought out a comedy (his first production) called *Le Baque de l'Oubli*, which had very great success, and following up this effort soon after with another comedy called *Le Hypocondriaque*, he was viewed as so reputable a competitor of Corneille that the superiority of the latter was questioned, and the tragi-comedy of Clitandre did much service to Routrou in the comparison.

Encouraged by opinions so very flattering to his genius, Routrou brought out five plays in succession before Corneille added one production to the two already named. The names of these were, *Doristée et Cléagénor; L'Heureuse Constance; Les Occasions Perdués; Les Menechemes;* and *Clemene*. The title of the last but one sufficiently indicates that it was taken from the Menechmi of Plautus, to which not only Routrou and after him Regnard, but Shakspeare and Dryden were indebted for the same plot. And Clemene, after being corrected and retouched by Tristan, was transcribed anew by Routrou, and brought out with great success under a new name.

While Clemene, under the name of *Vanceslas*, was in rehearsal, Routrou being put to jail for a gambling debt, was obliged to sell his property in that piece to the players. They gave him twenty

Digitized by Google

pistoles for it; but the play having succeeded far beyond their expectations, they voluntarily presented him with a handsome sum. It is to be regretted that an act so truly honourable and exemplary should not be accompanied with the names of the performers in its transmission to posterity. These facts, however, abundantly prove that Routrou was in high estimation with the public.

We have somewhere in our account of the Spanish stage observed, that the works of the Spanish dramatists, crude and irregular though they are allowed to be, were yet so replete with wit, humour, and eccentricity, that they formed a rich mine, from which the French dug up the most valuable materials for their dramas. Thus the Vanceslas of Routrou was taken from a Spanish play; nor was the great Corneille himself at all reluctant to delve in the same ground, being indebted to the Spanish for his inimitable play of The Cid.

The popularity of Vanceslas was augmented by a circumstance so singular in dramatic annals as to be handed down along with it. It was the last play in which the celebrated actor Baron made his appearance. Baron had quit the stage for thirty years and returned to it again. On his leaving the stage the first time, his parting character was in this play, and on his leaving it the second time he again chose it for his last appearance.

And here we may, once for all, without derangement of our subject, give a few words to that admirable actor and extraordinary man, Michal Baron. He was born at the beautiful and romantic town of *Issoudun*, in the department of *Indre*, and on the river *Theole:* his father was a merchant, but he took to the stage. His powers of expressing the passions were so great that he was called the Roscius of his time. He excessively loved popularity, yet was lofty, proud and independent, and professionally so arrogant that he used to observe, that a Cæsar might arise once in a century, but that two thousand years were requisite to produce a Baron. For his superior excellence he was entirely indebted to his own exertions; so that Racine, when he was representing his *Andromache* to the actors, with the judgment of a poet and of a man of feeling, paid him the high compliment to say that he could not give him any instruction: for "your own heart," said he, "will tell you more than any lessons of mine can suggest." When Baron, at the conclusion of his second career, undertook to perform in Vanceslas, he was seventy years old, and had such an asthma that he could

Digitized by Google

scarcely speak. He was, however, entreated to perform; but had scarcely uttered twenty lines when he was obliged to quit the stage, which he did with these remarkable words:

Si proche du cercueil ou je me vois descendre.

It had been more dignified in Baron to have abstained from returning to the stage after his thirty years absence, being then very infirm: but he was so great a favourite with the public that they would have endured any thing from him. One evening, however, when he repeated the lines

Je suis jeune il est vrai: mais aux ames bien nees
La valeur n'attend pas le nombre des annees,—

they burst into an involuntary laugh. Baron, affecting to disregard the risible effect his pronunciation of the lines had upon the audience, gravely repeated the passage. This occasioned them to laugh more vehemently than before; upon which the old gentleman came forward and seriously addressed the parterre in these terms—"Gentlemen, I shall now begin for the third time; but if I hear any one laugh I shall quit the theatre immediately, never to return." This appeal so sensibly affected them that they took particular care not to offend him again; not but that they had still stronger motives to laughter, for when he was kneeling at the feet of his mistress and she desired him to rise, he was unable to get upon his legs again till two scene-shifters came on and helped him.

To return to Routrou. He was so evidently making a formidable stand against Corneille, that the latter felt the necessity of resorting to exertions of no ordinary kind, in order to maintain his superiority. In one year, therefore, he brought out three pieces:—*La Veuve; La Galerie de Palais;* and *La Suivante;* but without affecting the character and success of Routrou in any material degree, or in the least augmenting his own reputation. Of his last comedy (La Suivante) a French wit said that its principal merit was that the five acts were so exactly of a length that there was not a single line in any one, more than in either of the others. These discouraging events are supposed to have constituted Corneille's principal inducement for joining himself to the cardinal Richelieu and his disreputable confederacy: for it was the year next after

Digitized by Google

the appearance of *La Suivante* that the *Tuilleries* was performed—a play to which Corneille was known to have given his hand, as one of the five poets. With this league, so unworthy of him, Corneille appears to have been soon disgusted: for, as the cardinal and Corneille were at variance at the time the latter brought out his CID, and as the Cid first appeared in 1636, it is evident to demonstration that Corneille's partnership with the coalition did not last, at the furthest, more than a year. That he never would have joined it at all but for the purpose of obtaining a liberal patron in Richelieu is probable. That he was disappointed in his views no one, who has a heart or understanding to appreciate the dignity of genius, will lament.

In the year 1635, Corneille brought out a comedy intitled *La Place Royale*, and a tragedy, the first he ever published, called *Medée*. Neither of these met with any extraordinary marks of approbation; yet early in the next year he produced a comedy called *L'Illusion*, of which he himself confesses that he wrote it merely to divert his mind from the gloomy thoughts occasioned by the fate of his Medée, and of which he candidly avowed that it deserved but little notice. All this time, Routrou, was indefatigably employed, and brought out half a dozen plays, among which was *L'Heureuse Naufrage*, a comedy, which was well received, as indeed were all of them.

While Routrou was thus apparently in the high road to first rate fame, the genius of Corneille burst out at once unexpectedly in a blaze which astonished the public, and struck Routrou's muse down to the earth. In two months after the appearance of *L'Illusion* came forth the CID, which gave Corneille a complete triumph, and cast all his competitors at an immeasurable distance. Never did a tragedy possess more extraordinary attraction,—never did one meet with more success;—it was committed to memory by all who were capable of reading;—the very children were taught to lisp the most beautiful lines of it—and when any one was desirous to express, in the strongest terms possible, his sense of superior beauty and excellence in any thing, he did so by comparison with this play: "*beau comme le Cid*" being the customary expression.

While the Cid was overwhelmed, to an extent before unknown, with the applauses of the nation, and its author honoured with the congratulations of all the enlightened and honest men in France, a nest of poetical hornets, influenced by the cardinal, attacked his

Digitized by Google

piece with all the virulence which falsehood and malice could supply. The cardinal, it seems, had a vast appetite to be looked upon as the author of the Cid, and made overtures to Corneille to that effect. But that great poet, in conformity to the principle which should ever actuate men of genius, regarded genuine fame so much more than favour or emoluments, that he peremptorily, and with marks of contempt, rejected the proposal. Richelieu was not one of those who readily overlook a slight; nor could his haughty soul brook a repulse. That he who could command every one under the sovereign, and mould all France to his will, should be resisted in a wish of his, by a poor poet, was not to be forgiven; and he resolved that, since the play was not to pass for his, the success of it should be interrupted, and its reputation destroyed. He, therefore, contrived that the Cid should be carefully examined by the academy, and that their sentence upon its merits should be given to the public. Of the cooperation of his creatures in the academy he was certain; nor was he wrong when he laid his account with it. But, blinded as he was by pride and malice, he now perceived that the public thought very little of the opinion of the academy, and would ultimately judge for themselves. In compliance with the cardinal's desire, and in their zeal to oblige their patron, those honest members contrived to find nothing but faults in the Cid, and, above all, they charged that every rule of the drama was violated in that composition. To this charge the partisans of Corneille agreed, but insisted that the violation of those rules was productive of the greatest beauties; and from it they drew conclusions in favour of the Cid, in which the public feeling as well as the purest and most enlightened judgments concurred.

The fact is, that the play, though a marvellous fine production, has some glaring faults. The Cid was known and much celebrated long before Corneille. To a Spanish poet of the name of Guillim de Castro, he acknowledges that he owes it; and Fontenelle says that there was no nation, however barbarous, to which the Cid was unknown. To Corneille it was allotted to give it to the world in a polished form.

Had the glory, nay the existence of France, and the fate of all Europe been at stake, the cardinal could not have called forth his energies to meet the emergency with greater warmth and industry than he did on this occasion. It must have been a curious spectacle to behold the ardour with which his eminence entered

Digitized by Google

into the investigation of the merits and demerits of the play, the vast importance of which he considered it, the authoritative solemnity with which he handed it over to the academy for trial, and the hypocritical gravity with which that contemptible body sat down to deliberate upon it! And so despotic was the influence which their patron exercised over that contemptible body of men, that they all joined in passing sentence of condemnation on the Cid,—all but that very man who alone, if personal competition can be considered a palliation of injustice, would have been least unjustifiable in joining them. Routrou turned with scorn from the league, generously asserted the excellence of the play and maintained the great superiority of Corneille, as a dramatic poet, to all men existing. Such are the ennobling effects of real genius; and where those are wanting, it may reasonably be concluded that, whatever brilliance may meet the eye, it is little more than specious and superficial, and that at the bottom some ingredient material to the composition of exalted genius is wanting. Routrou had so long been considered as standing in a reputable degree of competion with Corneille, that he might reasonably be pardoned for imagining himself his equal. To be at once put down from that high station might have awakened jealousy and kindled animosity even in the bosom of a good man. How can we then enough praise the integrity of heart and nobleness of nature displayed by him in relation to the great object of his emulation, whom he not only zealously defended, but panegyrized in the most enthusiastic terms of praise and veneration, and publicly placed the palm upon his head, calling him his father, his instructer, and the first object of his reverential regards upon earth.—Heavens, how little—how minute and miserable appears the great cardinal Richelieu in this transaction, when compared with Routrou!—that Routrou, who was compelled to sell one of his best plays for perhaps a tenth part of its value to save himself from a jail.

It has been suggested that the principal cause of the cardinal's dislike to the Cid was of a political nature, and proceeded from certain exalted sentiments it contained, which coward conscience whispered in his eminence's ears were meant to expose the corrupt influence of his administration, and to satirize his injustice and his rapacity. In corroboration of this, the great caution he observed in the proceeding, and the cunning with which he ensconced himself behind others, while he carried on the attack against the Cid, are

Digitized by Google

mentioned, and indeed not without much plausibility of reasoning. He first made one of his poetical slaves (*Scudery*) abuse the Cid, and then, under a pretence of respect and friendship, got Boisrobert to represent to Corneille how advantageous it would be to him to hand his production over to the academy for an examination, which, as it would no doubt be highly favourable, could not fail to put an end to all clamours, and at once silence Scudery and all such libellers. Corneille was not at all at a loss to perceive the drift of the application, and drily returned for answer, that he would not attempt to oppose the Cid's going before the academy, provided that body's passing judgment on it would afford his eminence the least amusement.

An answer so poignantly satirical would have made any man hesitate, who was not blinded by the most perverse malignity and pride; but on the cardinal it had no such effect. He, on the contrary, construed it into a full and voluntary consent on the part of Corneille. In consequence of which a committee was appointed to examine the Cid; and, the better to assume an appearance of impartiality, the attack of Scudery was also referred for examination to the committee. The report of the committee, and all the observations contained in it, were then debated in a full meeting of the academy: the debates upon the amendments proposed were long, and it was some time before that body came to a conclusion. But it so happened that the cardinal's cunning overshot the mark. As it is the nature of guilty men of every kind to keep their real motives concealed, his eminence was more reserved with his creatures of the academy than he ought to have been, and declined to instruct any of them with the particulars of his objections to the play. The consequence was that they ran headlong from one extreme to another; and instead of expunging or amending the faults, they expunged all the beauties, and thus rendered the objectionable parts still more striking. Having done this, they ordered it to be printed in the state to which they had reduced it, and the first sheet was sent to the cardinal for his opinion.

Richelieu, convinced that the public mind would revolt at the barbarous havoc committed by the academy, and that he himself would, in the end, be exposed, thought it expedient to limit his malice with a little prudence, and ordered the printing to be delayed till he revised the alterations; when, contenting himself

Digitized by Google

with a few inconsiderable alterations, to which, rather than go to open war with him, Corneille agreed, the piece was left in the state in which we see it at this day.

(To be continued.)

BIOGRAPHY.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WARREN,

Actor and Manager of the Philadelphia Theatre.

[Continued from page 221.]

The building of the theatre, of which Davis was now to become manager, originated in a kind of civil feud. In many of the chief cities and corporate towns of Great Britain, the magistracy is regarded with jealousy and dislike by a considerable portion of the people, who generally constitute an opposition party, having its leaders, its orators, and its demagogues. In all free nations there exist multitudes intolerant of laws and power, and too often intolerant in proportion to their actual exemption from restraint. The municipal power exercised in the towns alluded to is, on several accounts, more odious in its nature, and, to the people, appears infinitely more vexatious than that exercised by the great national government. As the municipal magistrates, in general, are persons who have risen, by sordid occupations, from the lower classes of society, they are viewed with contempt and irreverence by their fellow citizens; and being for the same reason prone to exert their brief authority even to abuse, and to bolster up their personal meanness with excessive arrogance, they are very offensive in the discharge of their offices. The sordid habits of their antecedent lives, too, renders them rapacious; while ignorance, the result of a defective education, commits them to the tyranny of their own tempers, without a guide to direct them to the right, or reason to control them from going wrong. This is pretty nearly true of all the corporate towns in England, and is more particularly so of the episcopal sees, in which the civil authority, being originally intermingled with that of the church, or derived from it, still retains a

Digitized by Google

strong spice of ecclesiastical rigour and haughty despotism. Exeter is one of these, and yields to none of them in the vulgar ignorance of its corporate magistrates, or in the stupid, we might say fanatical, rigour of the execution of its municipal laws. In those parts of the suburbs therefore, to which the power of the mayor and corporation does not extend, a kind of warfare is maintained against them; and *Westout*, being out of the reach of the corporation of Exeter, was fixed upon as a proper place to set up a theatre in opposition to that in the city. Mr. Friar, a gentleman of consequence and great goodness, who was the leader of the party, was the principal promoter, and, by his influence, the chief support, of the new theatre. They opened with She Stoops to Conquer, and The Waterman; in which Warren played young Marlow and Bundle. Cross, lately of the Philadelphia theatre, performed the same night. As they had strong reinforcements pouring in upon them, their success exceeded their expectations, and the old established theatre felt the opposition severely. Nor was the mortification experienced by the opposite party confined to the theatre: the company joined their patrons in a hostility of another and more ludicrous kind. To ridicule the mayor and corporation of the city, they instituted a mock body which they called the corporation of Westout; the terms of admission to it were fixed at four pence, for which he who paid it received a tankard of beer. When the corporation of Exeter went to the play, the corporation of Westout went also and took the opposite side of the house, and, in short, kept up a mock emulation of them in every thing. Nay, as the former had their contested elections, the latter had their contested elections also. For the office of *Mayor of Westout* two candidates were started; a mock contest was carried on with great spirit and much merriment; both candidates retained counsel, who, in their arguments and scuffles, caricatured the proceedings of the Exeter corporation. Warren particularly remembers that *Itinerant* Ryley was retained by one of them; and that, dressed in a gown and big wig, he excited much mirth with the wit and humour of his pleadings before the mock court, which was held at a public house called the Green Tree, in St. Thomas's, otherwise Westout.

The company went on swimmingly for a few weeks, when unfortunately Mr. Friar was suddenly taken ill: his life was despaired of, and in him the company lost their main prop. His influence kept the people alive to the interests of the new theatre; and when that

Digitized by Google

ceased to operate, the people flagged in their attention and gradually fell off. Nevertheless, the company kept on playing, though not so successfully, yet with a sufficiency for support, which seems to have been the utmost extent of their hopes or wishes.

While they were thus getting on, Warren was again visited by his old pest (Biggs) who called upon him for his customary purpose; and, meeting him by accident at an ordinary, where Warren usually dined, began to abuse him with every foul epithet which his perfect skill in blackguardism could supply. Though naturally pacific, Warren lost all patience; yet being unwilling to strike a man so much elder than himself, he took a tobacco pipe from the table and broke it over the fellow's head. This was enough for Biggs, who immediately sallied forth, and returned soon after with a summons for Warren, and another for Woolley, who had actually done nothing at all, to appear before a magistrate for an assault and battery. The justices were at the time sitting at the courthouse at Norney,* and our two young heroes were brought before them, attended, as before, by Davis, who greatly piqued himself upon his legal knowledge, argumentative powers and eloquence, and resolved to exercise them in behalf of his young friends, not in the least doubting that he would be able to make the court feel and admire the force of his talents.

It happened that the presiding magistrate was just that kind of a man on whom even mighty Davis's powers of persuasion or reasoning could make no sort of impression. His name was C—r—n, and a more hard, crabbed, crossgrained, selfwilled and impracticable fraction of magistracy never sat on a bench in any country. He knew Burns's Justice indifferently well; but, from natural taste as well as long habit, he was most deeply versed in those parts which arm justices with scourges for the unfortunate part of the community;—he had the vagrant acts all by heart;—was an adept in discussing knotty points in the poor-laws;—knew as well as any one how to make a young booby go for a soldier by way of making amends for burdening the community with a child, and could then, with dexterity, upon the frail mother's oath, father the child on some person able to maintain it, who perhaps never saw either one

* A part of Exeter, so called in abbreviation of Northerny, being at the north of the city, as Southerny, on the opposite side, is also abbreviated to Sowney.

Digitized by Google

or the other;—no justice knew better how to deal with gypsies;—and as for actors, he had as rancorous an aversion to them as ever fanaticism begat upon stupid pride. Before this gracious personage did Biggs charge William Warren with having assaulted him the said Biggs and putting him in fear of his life, in breach of the king's peace, and contrary to the statutes in that case made and provided. Davis attempted to speak; but Davis was silenced by the bench. Warren requested to be heard, and muttered something about a tobacco pipe: but the bench ordered him to hold his tongue. After having heard out the long story of Biggs, which though it was as false as the devil could make it, with all the complacency imaginable, C—r—n turned to Warren and interrogated him with great severity: "And pray what have you to say for yourself?—what are you?"—To this Biggs interposing replied, "why, please your honour, he's a strolling player!"—"A strolling player indeed!" exclaimed C—r—n,—"Oho, Mr. strolling player! I think we shall"——"Yes, sir," said Warren resolutely, "I am a strolling player, nor do I see why I should be ashamed of being one, so long as I deport myself like an honest man: but pray, sir, have the goodness to ask my accuser what he is."—"What is your profession, sir?" said C—r—n very respectfully to Biggs. "Since he has answered for me," said Warren, "I will answer for him: he is a strolling manager!"—"What, have I been listening to an actor all this time?" said C—r—n, starting up in surprise and indignation; "what! both parties players?—all players?—all players?—Get you gone!—away with you all!—get you gone, I say, one and all; and let me hear no more of you. Away, away, I say, or I'll so make you hear of it." Here Biggs, after making twenty bows of submission to the worshipful bench, stumped as fast as he could out of court: and Warren, Woolley and Davis, after waiting to see him out, and, instead of bowing to the bench, laughing heartily at Biggs, left Norney and returned to Westout. As this adventure sickened Biggs with any further attempts of the same kind, Warren never saw him afterwards.

And here it may not be amiss to advert retrospectively to some incidents which show the illiberal haughtiness and contempt with which the sons of the sock and buskin are treated by many people in England, who ought to be incapable of harbouring such unworthy sentiments. When Mr. Kemble went to the marquis of Salisbury (lord chamberlain) upon some important concerns respecting the

Digitized by Google

theatre, his lordship, after the business was over, with his *accustomed condescension* and *good nature*, told that respectable gentleman, that if he chose to take any refreshment, a servant should be ordered to conduct him to *the butler's room*. And Warren relates an incident of nearly the same kind that occurred when he was playing in Jefferson's company at Totness, but which we accidentally omitted.

A Mr. Carey, a person of high rank, who resided, and probably yet resides, at a place called Tor-Abbey, in Devonshire, being about to celebrate some domestic festival, applied to Mr. Jefferson to bring his people to the abbey to perform a play, for which he agreed to advance an adequate reward. Accordingly the whole company attended their manager thither, some in coaches and postchaises, some in gigs, and some on horseback; but, for the propriety of the thing, none on this important occasion went on foot. They all very naturally laid their account with being hospitably treated, and received with decency and respect. What must have been their mortification then to be shown, immediately on their arrival, into the *Servant's Hall*, where a table was laid for them to dine at! Mr. Jefferson sent to Mr. Carey to remonstrate on this indignity: however the company, one and all, dismissing every personal consideration touching themselves, resented very warmly the insult to their much beloved and respected manager, and, putting him into a carriage, sent him off, resolved that, whatever indignity might be offered to the corps, he should touch no share of it. As for themselves, they prepared to play; but in the most peremptory manner refused either to eat or drink, till Mr. Carey came in person, apologized handsomely for his remissness, and ordered them an elegant room, where they fared sumptuously. After which they had spirits to perform the School for Scandal and the Agreeable Surprise to Mr. Carey's satisfaction.

The theatre at Westout continued to be occasionally opened for a considerable length of time, with various degrees of success: the greatest however not sufficient to afford a young actor any reasonable inducement to remain in the company. At last they were all reduced to their old plight, and were sorely pinched by distress. This consideration, together with the recollection of the many disagreeable circumstances attendant upon the life of an itinerant performer, against which no human prudence could provide, and from which no integrity or innocence could serve as a shield,

Digitized by Google

began heavily to weigh on our hero's mind, and to make a deep impression on his feelings. He had already undergone all the inconveniences incident to the calling: but for the beneficence of his parents, he must sometimes have experienced poverty in its most intolerable shape, hunger; he saw that the prejudices of a large portion of society were against the character of a player;—that the dispensers of justice themselves were so warped whenever they came in contact with an actor, that innocence was not always a surety for protection; and that the profession, in that rank in which it was his fate hitherto to move, was laborious without profit, and unprofitable without fame; that so long as he continued to associate with such persons as those in whose fortunes he had hitherto shared, there would be no chance whatever of his emerging from wretchedness and obscurity; but that he must drudge on through a wearisome painful life, and at the end perhaps die like an old post horse, in the harness. Indeed what could he hope, seeing, as he constantly did, so much penury around him, and at the same time so much ignorance and incapacity in many of his associates, with so little talent in any of them, that it seemed contrary to the nature of things that they should succeed in any such profession; so that he had every day additional cause rather to wonder at their being able to live than to be surprised at the distresses under which they so frequently laboured. Of the ignorance of some of the unfortunates who contrived to find their way to the stage, our friend mentions a singular instance in the person of a wine-cooper of Exeter, who took it into his precious noddle to become an actor, and was received by Mr. Davis. Mr. Pullen, for that was the gentleman's name, being appointed to perform the character of *Grey*, in The Chapter of Accidents, when he came to that affecting part in the denouement, in which *Cecilia's* fame is cleared up, and *Grey* along with the rest congratulates her upon it, instead of saying "Rise, my glorious girl! rise, *purified* and forgiven," said "Rise, my glorious girl—rise, PUTREFIED and forgiven," without being at all sensible of the absurdity of his error.

While Warren was ruminating with no very pleasing sensations on the best measures to pursue, he received a letter from his father requesting him to return home. This determined him in one respect. He resolved to go home; but was far from thinking to quit the stage. He had more substantial grounds than his own bare opinion for concluding that he was not without considerable talents

Digitized by Google

for the profession, for that was admitted by every one: yet when he reflected that they had never been tested by comparison with players of any eminence, he was not quite free from doubts upon that point. Something however he knew he possessed which would go a great way towards forwarding him: with industry, temperance, and quickness of study, he knew he was well furnished by habit as well as by nature; and these would, at all events, secure him in the end a respectable establishment: he, therefore, resolved at once to leave Davis and go home, from whence he could look out at leisure, and perhaps, in no long time, get a place in a respectable company of players; in which should he fail of success, he was determined to abandon the stage for ever, and leave it with the loss of two years and five months of his time which he had wasted in strolling.

His resolution being formed, Warren fixed on a day for his departure, and was joined by a person of the name of Snagg, an inhabitant of the city of Bath, who, being on his return home, agreed to bear him company in the journey, which was no less a distance than eighty-six miles.—When the morning arrived for their departure, they found that they must either encounter a very heavy fall of snow or postpone their journey; which last the slender state of their finances forbade: they were therefore fain to set off in the height of the storm; and, as they expended some time in visiting and bidding adieu to friends, it was eleven o'clock before they reached Cullompton, where they stopped for a time to rest and take some refreshment. As they were upon the point of setting out, a returned chaise presented itself going to Taunton, the driver of which agreed to take them there for a trifle. Snagg got so drunk on the road that the motion of the chaise put him to sleep, and the driver himself got so inebriated that he was unable to hold the rein; so that Warren was obliged to cram him into the carriage with Snagg, and to take the office of driver on himself. With the various delays occasioned by the misbehaviour of those two fellows, it was nine o'clock at night before they arrived at Taunton, where Warren helped Snagg to go to a house, at which he was known, and there having put him to bed, went himself to take his supper with an old friend; after which he returned to the inn where the chaise stopped, got a bed for the night, and slept as sweetly as if the dawning of the next day was to light him to a princely fortune.

Digitized by Google

The joint stock of our two travellers for defraying the expenses of their journey from Exeter to Bath was a guinea, or *twenty-one shillings* sterling. This scanty provision demanded not only speedy travelling, but strict frugality. Warren, therefore, rose by the break of day, to be on the road as soon as possible, and wakened Snagg, who also rose; but—think, reader—imagine if you possibly can, what must have been their consternation, when, on drawing on his clothes, Snagg found that the whole of the money which he, as cash-keeper for both, had in his pocket, was gone! Dreary indeed was their prospect: they had yet fifty-two miles to travel; the day was cold and raw; the roads were thickly covered with snow—and of their whole stock, there remained but *four shillings*, which was in the pocket of our friend. They were moreover out of all reach of assistance; for if there were any idea more extravagant, or any thing more impossible than all others, it would be that of a strolling player's getting any one to lend him money in that country. As there was no mode whatever for the lost cash to get away, but by its rolling out of Snagg's pocket as he lay drunk in the carriage, Warren proposed to resort to the driver and beg of him to search the chaise, or, if he had found the money, to call upon him to restore it. The driver, however, arriving at the moment, saved them all further trouble of debating the matter by demanding his fare, and by declaring, on being questioned touching the lost money, and confirming the declaration with a thundering oath, that he had swept out the chaise, and that there was nothing in it more than usual. Had he been ever so much disposed to believe the fellow, his manner would have confirmed Warren in the suspicion, that he had either found the cash in his sweeping, or purloined it out of Snagg's pocket; for he told them that they might have their ride for nothing, and seemed well pleased when they gave the matter up: at the same time our poor travellers were afraid to make a noise about it, lest it should lead to a charge on the part of the driver, and to a suspicion in all who heard it, that their loss was a pretext formed to shuffle off the payment of his fare for carrying them. They were, therefore, fain to put up with it and push forward as well as they could on their journey—a difficult undertaking, since of the four shillings which remained in Warren's pocket, two being demanded for his lodging for the night, no more than two were left to defray their expenses.

Digitized by Google

As every moment's delay would enhance their difficulties, Warren urged his fellow traveller to be gone, and they set off with their best speed on the road to Bridgwater; but on the way the sole of one of Snagg's boots ripped off; and as they had neither time nor cash to spare for getting it stitched together again, they stopped at a cottage, borrowed a knife, and cut it entirely off. By way of consoling Warren, and cajoling himself with a modicum of hope, whether false or well founded, Snagg assured his companion that he knew where they would get relief: "You mayn't think it, perhaps," said he, "but I can tell you that I have a friend at Bridgwater, that's very well to live in the world; and you'll see, you'll see what a fine dinner we shall have there!" Entering Bridgwater, Mr. Snagg conducted his fellow traveller to this house of promised hospitality, where they found only an old woman, whose best cheer was a slice of cheese and bread and some beer. Not one article of these was good; however for it, such as it was, Mr. Snagg's friend insisted on being paid one shilling!! Snagg affected surprise and mortification: but Warren was seriously angry with him;—and well he might, for this payment left them but six pence for the residue of their journey.

Much lighter in pocket than in heart, our poor adventurers again proceeded to make the best of their way; Warren intending to push on to Bath without stopping. It was no less than thirty miles to be sure—a long walk to take between dinner and bed-time—but he recollected that he had once, upon an occasion still less urgent, walked from Bath to Sherborn, which was forty-three miles, between breakfast and dinner. Snagg, however, hung upon him like a log upon a mastiff's neck, and retarded his progress. Though he could *do* nothing, he *said* every thing he could think of to keep Warren in good humour and reconcile him to his deplorable situation, as they walked on towards Glastonbury. "I'll tell you what it is, Warren," said this comfortable companion; "but what signifies my telling you, when—damn that old witch for making a liar of me—I know you'll not believe it."—"That I shan't if it be good, you may depend upon it," said Warren; "your promises are like pie-crusts, only made to be broken—nay, not half so good; for they end in rotten cheese, brown bread and sour beer, with a swinging charge at the end of them."—"Nay, now but hear me this once," said Snagg, "and if I fail, why never believe me again. At Shepton Mallet I have a friend—a real friend—it will delight

Digitized by Google

you to see how rejoiced he and his wife, and his children, and every one in his house—ay, the servants, and the very dogs, will be to see me. Good souls! whenever I go there, they cluster about me; and the first thing they do is to make me eat and drink till I'm ready to burst;—but you shall see, you shall see:—there we shall get a comfortable hot supper and good bed, and a nice breakfast before we set out, after taking a good night's rest—ay, and money, if need be, to help us on to Bath in the morning in the stage—snug, boy, snug. But hark you, Warren," (they were then just entering Glastonbury) "suppose we stop here and have a mouthful—eh!—what say you?—that six pence you have got!—just enough—the nicest thing in the world—exactly enough—and then we shall have strength and spirits to dash on the rest of the way, and arrive just in time to supper at my friend's at Shepton Mallet." "Your friend!" exclaimed Warren, who could not help being diverted with the earnestness of Snagg's solicitation, and wanted to tantalize him: "your friend! I'll lay my life it will be another cheese and bread adventure; but remember—we have nothing now to pay for it; so if any thing of that kind happens, you must answer for it." "Done with you," said Snagg, "so now let us come into this alehouse before us here and take something."—"Well, be it so," replied our friend, laughing—"here it goes! the last six pence! !"

Having discussed that poor remnant of his cash in bread and beer, Warren with his companion pushed on to the town of Shepton Mallet, where Snagg brought him to the house of his friend, where their reception was little better than it had been at his other friend's, at Bridgwater. The family were gone (all but the man's old mother) to spend the christmas holidays at Wells. As it was now rather late, very dark, extremely cold, the ground covered with snow, the roads dangerous, and the young men evidently fatigued, the old sibyl who guarded the house agreed to let them stay for the night, gave them for supper something so very bad that they could scarcely eat it, beer almost turned to alegar—and, to repose in, a bed so short that they were almost frozen to death. However the prospect of home cheered Warren. In the morning he rose betimes, and reached Bath that day, being the day of universal festivity and good cheer in England, *Christmas day*. There, in the arms of his parents and family, by a blazing fire, and, according to British custom, with a dinner of roast beef and plumb pudding, he gave all remembrance of past sorrows and sufferings to the winds.

Digitized by Google

With this, the third sally of our knight, ended the distressed part of his life. We shall next have to accompany him through fortunes which, being more propitious, were less marked with the kind of adventure that has enabled us to hold up to our readers so true a picture of the miserable state of strolling players in England.

(To be continued.)

MEMOIRS OF JAMES QUIN.

The celebrated Comedian.

JAMES QUIN was born in King-street, Covent-garden, Feb. 24th, 1693. The ancestors of Mr. Quin were of an ancient family in the kingdom of Ireland. His father, James Quin, was bred at Trinity-college, Dublin, from whence he came to England, entered himself of Lincoln's-inn, and was called to the bar; but his father, Mark Quin, who had been Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1676, dying about that period, and leaving him an ample estate, he quitted England in 1701 for his native country. His marriage was attended with circumstances which affected the interest of his son so materially, as probably to influence his future destination in life. His mother was a reputed widow, who had been married to a person in the mercantile line, and who left her, to pursue some traffic or particular business in the West Indies. He had been absent from her near seven years without her having received any letter from, or the least information about him. He was even given out to be dead, which report was universally credited. She went into mourning for him; and some time after, Mr. Quin's father, who is said to have then possessed an estate of 1000*l.* a year, paid his addresses to her, and married her. The consequence of this marriage was Mr. Quin: his parents continued for some time in an undisturbed state of happiness, when the first husband returned, claimed his wife, and had her. Mr. Quin the elder retired with his son, to whom he is said to have left his property.

Another, and more probable account is, that the estate was suffered to descend to the heir at law, and the illegitimacy of Mr. Quin being proved, he was dispossessed of it, and left to shift for himself. He received his education at Dublin, under the care of Dr. James, until the death of his father in 1710, when the progress of it was interrupted by the litigations which arose about his estate.

Digitized by Google

It is generally admitted, that he was deficient in literature; and it has been said, that he laughed at those who read books by way of inquiry after knowledge, saying that he read men—that the world was the best book. This account is believed to be founded in truth, and will prove the great strength of his natural understanding, which enabled him to establish so considerable a reputation as a man of sense and genius. Deprived thus of the property he expected, and with no profession to support him, though he is said to have been intended for the law, Mr. Quin had nothing to rely upon but the exercise of his talents, and with these he soon supplied the deficiencies of fortune.

The theatre in Dublin was then struggling for an establishment, and there he made his first essay. The part he performed was Abel, in the Committee, in 1714; and he represented a few other characters, as Cleon, in Timon of Athens; Prince of Tanais, in Tamerlane, and others, but all of equal insignificance. After performing one season in Dublin, he was advised by Chetwood, the prompter, not to smother his rising genius in a kingdom where there was no great encouragement for merit. This advice he adopted, and came to London, where he was immediately received into the company at Drury-lane. It may be proper here to mention, that he repaid the friendship of Chetwood, by a recommendation which enabled that gentleman to follow him to the metropolis. At that period it was usual for young actors to perform inferior characters, and to rise in the theatre as they displayed skill and improvement. In conformity to this practice, the parts which Mr. Quin had allotted to him were not calculated to procure much celebrity. He performed the lieutenant of the Tower, in Rowe's Lady Jane Grey; the steward, in Gay's What-d'ye-call-it; and Vulture, in The Country Lasses; all acted in 1715. In December 1716, he performed a part of more consequence, that of Antenor, in Mrs. Centlivre's Cruel Gift; but in the beginning of the next year we find him degraded to speak about a dozen lines in the character of the second player, in Three Hours after Marriage. Accident, however, had just before procured him an opportunity of displaying his talents, which he did not neglect.

An order had been sent from the lord chamberlain to revive the play of Tamerlane for the 4th of November, 1716. It had accordingly been got up with great magnificence. On the third night, Mr. Mills, who performed Bajazet, was suddenly taken ill, and

Digitized by Google

application was made to Mr. Quin to read the part; a task which he executed so much to the satisfaction of the audience, that he received a considerable share of applause. The next night he made himself perfect, and performed it with redoubled proofs of approbation. On this occasion he was complimented by several persons of distinction and dramatic taste, upon his early rising genius. It does not appear that he derived any other advantage at that time from his success.

Impatient therefore of his situation, and dissatisfied with his employers, he determined upon trying his fortune at Mr. Rich's theatre, at Lincoln's-inn Fields, then under the management of Messrs. Keene and Christopher Bullock, and accordingly in 1717, quitted Drury-lane, after remaining there two seasons. He continued at this theatre seventeen years, and during that period, supported with credit, the same characters which were then admirably performed at the rival theatre. Soon after he quitted Drury-lane, an unfortunate transaction took place, which threatened to interrupt, if not entirely to stop his theatrical pursuits; and which evinces that jealousy and rancour which are too prevalent in the theatrical world. This was an unlucky encounter between him and Mr. Bowen, which ended fatally for the latter. From the evidence given at the trial, it appeared that on the 17th of April, 1718, about four or five o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Bowen and Mr. Quin met accidentally at the Fleece tavern, in Cornhill. They drank together in a friendly manner, and jested with each other for some time, until their conversation turned on their performance on the stage. Bowen said, that Quin had acted Tamerlane in a loose sort of manner; and Quin in reply observed, that his opponent had no occasion to value himself on his performance, since Mr. Johnson, who had but seldom acted it, represented Jacomo, in the Libertine, as well as he who had acted it often. These observations, probably, irritated them both, and the conversation changed to another subject, not better calculated to produce good humour—the honesty of each party. In the course of the altercation, Bowen asserted that he was as honest a man as any in the world, which occasioned a story about his political tenets to be introduced by Quin; and both parties being warm, a wager was laid on the subject, which was determined in favour of Quin, on his relating that Bowen sometimes drank to the health of the Duke of Ormond, and sometimes refused it; at the same time asking the referee, how he could be

Digitized by Google

as honest a man as any in the world, who acted upon two different principles? The gentleman who acted as umpire, then told Mr. Bowen, that if he insisted upon his claim to be as honest a man as any in the world, he must give it against him.

Here the dispute seemed to have ended, nothing in the rest of the conversation indicating any remains of resentment in either party. Soon afterwards, however, Mr. Bowen arose, threw down some money for his reckoning, and left the company. In about a quarter of an hour Mr. Quin was called out by a porter sent by Bowen; and both Quin and Bowen went together, first to the Swan tavern, and then to the Pope's-Head tavern, where a rencounter took place; in which Bowen received a wound, of which he died on the 20th of April following. In the course of the evidence it was sworn, that Bowen, after he had received the wound, declared that justice had been done to him; that there had been nothing but fair play, and, if he died, he freely forgave his antagonist. On this evidence Mr. Quin was, on the 10th of July, found guilty of manslaughter only, and soon after returned to his employment on the stage.

Another accident of a similar nature happened to him, and likewise his friend, Ryan. The theatre, in which Mr. Quin was at this time established, had not the patronage of the public in any degree equal to its rival at Drury-lane; nor had it the good fortune to acquire those advantages which fashion liberally confers on its favourites, until several years after. The performances, however, though not equal to those of Drury-lane, were far from deserving censure. In the season of 1718-19, Mr. Quin performed in Buckingham's Scipio Africanus; and in 1719-20 Sir Walter Raleigh; and in the same year had two benefits: The Provoked Wife, on January 31st, before any other performer; and The Squire of Alsatia, on April 17th. The succeeding season he performed in Buckingham's Henry IV. of France; in Richard II. and The Imperial Captives. The season of 1720-21 was very favourable to his reputation as an actor. October 29th The Merry Wives of Windsor was revived, in which he first played Falstaff, with great increase of fame. This play, which was well supported by Ryan, in Ford; Spiller, in Doctor Caius; Boheme, in Justice Shallow; and Griffin, in Sir Hugh Evans, was acted nineteen times during the season; a proof that it made a very favourable impression on the public.

On the revival of Every Man in his Humour, in 1724-5, he re-

Digitized by Google

presented old Knowell; and it is not unworthy of observation, that Kitely, afterwards so admirably performed by Mr. Garrick, was assigned to Mr. Hippisley, the Shuter or Edwin of his day.

At this time Lincoln's-inn Fields theatre had, by the assistance of some pantomimes, been more frequented than at any time since it was opened. January 29, 1728, The Beggar's Opera was acted for the first time. It is said that when Gay showed this performance to his patron, the Duke of Queensberry, his Grace's observation was, "This is a very odd thing, Gay;—it is either a very good thing, or a bad thing." It proved the former beyond the warmest expectation of the author or his friends; though Quin, whose knowledge of the public taste cannot be questioned, was so doubtful of its success, that he cheerfully resigned the part of Macheath. It was performed with the most astonishing success. Two years afterwards, March 19th, 1729-30, Quin had the Beggar's Opera for his benefit, and performed the part of Macheath himself, when he received the sum of 206*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* which were several pounds more than the common prices had produced any one night at that theatre; for the highest receipt during the run of the Beggar's Opera was 198*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* His benefit the preceding year brought him only 102*l.* 18*s.*; and the succeeding only 129*l.* 3*s.*

December 7th, 1732, Covent-garden theatre was opened, and the company belonging to Lincoln's-inn Fields removed thither. The play was The Way of the World: pit and boxes 5*s.* each. So little attraction, however, had the new theatre, that the receipt of the house amounted but to 115*l.* In the course of this season Mr. Quin was called upon to exercise his talents in singing, and accordingly performed Lycomedes, in Gay's posthumous opera of Achilles, eighteen nights.

The next season concluded his service at Covent-garden; and in the beginning of the season 1734-5, he removed to the rival theatre, Drury-lane, on such terms as no hired actor had before received. During Mr. Quin's connexion with Mr. Rich, he was employed, or at least consulted, in the conduct of the theatre by his principal, as a kind of deputy-manager. While in this situation he had a whole heap of plays brought him, which he put in a drawer in his bureau. An author had given him a play behind the scenes, which probably he lost or mislaid, not troubling his head about it. Two or three days after, *Mr. Bayes* waited on him to know how he liked his play: Quin made some excuse for its not being received,

Digitized by Google

and the author desired to have it returned. "There," says Quin, "there it lies, on that table." The author took up a play that was lying on the table, but on opening, found it was a tragedy, and told Quin of his mistake. "Faith, then, Sir," said he, "I have lost your play." "Lost my play!" cries the bard. "Yes, by G—, I have," answered the tragedian; "but there is a drawer full of comedies and tragedies, take any two you will in the room of it." The poet left him in high dudgeon, and the hero stalked across the room to his Spa-water and Rhenish, with a negligent felicity.

From the time of Mr. Quin's establishment at Drury lane until the appearance of Mr. Garrick, in 1741, he was generally allowed the foremost rank in his profession. The elder Mills, who succeeded Booth, was declining; and Milward, an actor of some merit, had not risen to the height of his excellence, which however, was not, at best very great; and Boheme was dead. His only competitor seems to have been Delahe, whose merits were lost in indolent indulgence. He was a young tragedian from Dublin, who made his first appearance in London, at Goodman's-fields. Novelty, youth, and a handsome figure, took off from any severe criticism on his elocution and action. In short, though so far from the fashionable end of the town, he drew to him several polite audiences, and became in such a degree of repute, that comparisons were made between him and Quin; nor was he without his admirers of both sexes, who gave him the preference. He was not insensible of this, and determined to leave Goodman's-fields, and indulge his ambition at one of the theatres royal. He engaged with Mr. Rich at Covent-garden, about the time that Quin left it; and in two or three years gained that station which most of the other actors could not attain in many years. He was esteemed a just player, yet was remarkable for his violence of voice, which especially in Alexander, pleased many; for the million, as Colley Cibber says, are apt to be transported when the drum of the ear is soundly rattled. But, on the contrary, Quin's solemn sameness of pronunciation, which conveyed an awful dignity, was charmingly affecting in Cato.

Delane was young enough to rise to great perfection; Quin was then at the height of his: if Delane had the more pleasing person Quin had the more affecting action; both might have appeared with greater advantage, if they had been on the same stage. They were the Cæsar and Pompey of the theatres; and one stage would have

Digitized by Google

been incompatible with their ambition: Quin could bear no one on the footing of an equal—Delane no one as a superior. In the year 1745, Aaron Hill, in a periodical paper, called *The Prompter*, attacked some of the principal actors of the stage, and particularly Colley Cibber and Mr. Quin. Cibber, according to custom, laughed, but Quin was angry; and waited on Mr. Hill; a quarrel ensued between them, which ended in the exchange of a few blows. Mr. Quin was scarcely settled at Drury-lane before he became embroiled in a dispute relative to Monsieur Poitier and Madame Roland, then two celebrated dancers, for whose neglect of duty it had fallen to his lot to apologize. It was intimated in the papers, that Quin had with malice accused these dancers; but the manager, Fleetwood, by an advertisement, declared that Quin had acted in this affair in his behalf, and with the strictest regard to truth and justice. No further notice was taken of the business, and soon afterwards the delinquent dancers made their apology to the public, and were received into favour.

(To be continued.)

MISCELLANY.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM WINDHAM.

We think there are few of our readers who will not forgive—we are sure that the far greater number of them will thank us, for the following short observations on a person who, when living, was the glory of his country and an honour to the whole human race; and whose character, now that he is dead, may be held up as one of the most admirable models which any age or country has produced, for the imitation of those who wish to be truly illustrious. As a piece of eloquence, animated yet unaffected—vigorous and affluent, yet concise and perspicuous, this sketch of the great statesman it alludes to, may be put in successful competition with the very best specimens furnished by "The Edinburgh Review," from which it is extracted. The writer, indeed, seems to have been raised above his ordinary standard by the elevated nature of his subject, and his eloquence to have derived additional grandeur and truth from its contact with the very name of Windham.

Digitized by Google

It appears that a bill having been brought into parliament for a change in the mode of representation, Mr. Windham, on the 26th of May, 1809, made, in opposition to it, a very able speech, which, being published, came under the consideration of the Edinburgh Reviewers, who, in the preliminary observations to their criticism on it, gave the following character of that illustrious personage.

"The speech before us is not only the production of one of the "finest geniuses, and most honourable men that the world ever "saw, but it is almost the latest memorial by which his splendid "talents and manly virtues have left themselves to be remember- "ed. The age which has witnessed the eclipse of the ancient splen- "dor and independence of Europe, seems also to be that in which "the heroic age of England is doomed to become extinct and to "perish. The mighty minds of Burke and Fox and Pitt and Nelson "have been withdrawn, in our own times, from the degraded scene "of our affairs,—and almost the last star in that great constellation "set at the death of Mr. Windham,—a death which has deprived "his country of its most perfect model of a gentleman, and left "both friends and enemies to deplore that generous and romantic "gallantry of feeling, which gave a certain chivalrous elevation "to all his views and acting,—those beautiful accomplishments "which embellished the whole society in which he lived,—that fine "and graceful wit, which fascinated those who were the most ad- "verse to his principles, and bound, as with a spell, the very men "who were the most aware of its seductions,—that hightempered "honour and unsullied purity, which were never questioned even "by the calumniating zealots of reform, and emerged unspotted "even from their monstrous alliance with the creatures of corrup- "tion. A better opportunity, we hope, will soon arise, for attempt- "ing to delineate the intellectual character of this extraordinary "person. But it is not without its use, even at present, to dwell a "little upon some of its most singular features; on the strange "opposition which seemed occasionally to subsist between his "genius and opinions—his principles and his prejudices. It is an "act, indeed, of essential justice to the public to endeavour to "counteract any errors that may have been spread abroad under "the sanction of that respected name;—to prescribe bounds to an "admiration, which can only be carried to excess when it con- "founds his character and his accomplishments with his tenets,— "and, above all, to unmask the mean arts of those priests of cor-

Digitized by Google

" ruption, who would trick out their idol in his mantle, and shield " themselves behind the authority of one who was not their bitterest " enemy only because he could not be persuaded to believe in their " integrity,—who of all the men that ever lived in the world of po- " litics, viewed public profligacy, and every sort of baseness, with " the greatest loathing and abhorrence."

We are free to avow our heartfelt love and veneration for the illustrious name of Windham,—a love and a veneration which neither lapse of time, nor change of circumstances, can possibly impair, being first built on the adamantine foundation of that great man's exalted virtues and talents; and afterwards cemented by gratitude for honours and benefits, of which to be ever unmindful, would be profligacy beyond the largest measure of allowance which human charity can be expected to make for human wickedness.

Of attachment to such a man, independent of all personal feelings, who is he that need be ashamed?—Rather indeed what man, having pretensions to taste, but must be ashamed not to admire those astonishing mental powers,—that splendid yet robust wit, which could, at will, transform itself from the most fascinating playfulness, to the keenest satire,—those uncommon reasoning faculties, —that penetration, sagacity and prescience bordering on inspiration,—that deep knowledge in all the sciences,—that immense range of critical erudition, and all the other accomplishments, which drew, from one of the most learned men that ever lived, an application to Mr. Windham of these beautiful lines of the poet:

> Ingenium cui dîis, et mens contermina cœlo
> Cuncta unus, cunctos unus erat.

If we mistake not, it is Quintilian who, speaking of Tully, says "*ille se multum in literis proficisse sciat, cui Cicero valde placuerit.*" It might seem to argue vanity therefore, and look like the affectation of a degree of learning, to which we are not weak enough to aspire, if we were to rest our admiration of Mr. Windham on his superior intellectual endowments. In their vast extent, they were far out of the reach of any but the most profoundly learned. Not so his virtues:—These even he himself could not but know. His stern integrity,—his high and unsullied honour,—his disinterestedness and magnanimity,—his purity, for an equal to him in which we should in vain search through the records of ancient

Digitized by Google

and modern times, may surely be admired and eulogized by us who have witnessed their exercise and experienced their effects, when they have extorted acknowledgment from his political opponents, and praise even from his enemies. Yet did those rancorous jugglers with truth, as incapable of estimating his value as of looking with open eyes at the blaze of the noonday sun, endeavour to dim the lustre which they could not obscure, by hinting that his virtues were carried too far; and, being afraid to say any thing worse of him, called him *inflexible*, *severe*, *a stoic*, *a Cato*, and jargon of that kind, whereby they wilfully sunk what was well understood by all who knew him—namely, that he was as mild as he was firm, and that, that very heart which nature had qualified to purge a commonwealth with the address of a Solon and the inflexibility of a Lycurgus,—to thunder in the field of war, or carry destruction through the armed fleets of enemies, if called to it by his country's good, or the felicity of the human race, was alive to all the finer feelings, filled brimful and over, with the tender charities, and possessed, to an eminent extent, of the several virtues (in no other man perhaps ever united) which, in their public exercise, serve to protect mankind, and in their private to be a comfort and a blessing to those who come within their influence—all, in a gentle gradation, according to the objects to which they were applicable, shaded imperceptibly from the strict and rugged discipline of inexorable justice, down through the manly kindnesses, to those softer sympathies which honour the gentler sex, and even to the playful simplicity of the child. Such was WILLIAM WINDHAM!!—But enough!—the subject grows too big for us—we must drop it!——Farewel then, great and glorious being!—Be thou blest, even as thou hast blessed!———Accept, from one of the multitude whose lives expended in tears for thy loss would not half pay the debt they owe thee,—accept this poor tribute;———poor—but genuine, and not the last:——No, never the last, while one beat more of life remains to this heart.

> Jamque dies, ni fallor, adest quem semper acerbum
> Semper honoratum, sic dii voluistis, habebo.

Digitized by Google

FOR THE MIRROR OF TASTE.

You doubtless imagine, Mr. Editor, that I am sadly mortified at the contempt manifested by the public, on reading my last communication. Far different are my sensations I assure you: I know too well the ordinary fates of genius, to suffer impressions so derogatory to its dignity. Milton's immortal poem, his Paradise Lost, was never regarded with reverence until his death, and from that hour to this, it has been considered as the standard of English epic. Shakspeare never dreamed of the popularity his plays were destined to obtain. The death of their author put the seal of immortality upon them. In like manner I sit, and with vast satisfaction contemplate how avaricious posterity will be to read and to admire the profound lucubrations of Simon Shadow. While my page is read and hissed at by those who are now incompetent to discover its internal merits, I revenge myself by considering the time not far distant when these, my essays, will make a neat, pretty, well bound volume for a circulating library; thumbed by the hands of enraptured beauty; ogled by the spectacles of age, and doated on by the eyes of the student, as if fearful that a particle of such a treasure should be lost. After I have thus refreshed myself with this spectacle, I have meditated on the season as equally certain when some humbler retainer of letters, will delight both himself and the community, by the publication of a volume, intitled Beauties of Simon Shadow. All this, my readers will observe, is part of my present plan. The difference, therefore, between Shakspeare and myself consists in this, that he did not intend his works for posterity, and that I do. I leave it for any one to determine, whether this point cannot be proved with mathematic demonstration; viz. if a work that was not written for the admiration of future ages is admired by them, a work written professedly for that purpose, must infallibly receive that admiration. I deem it both modest and correct to make this express avowal, so that posterity may have a clew to be guided in their selection of the works which they read. But sir, my plan extends much deeper than my own individual self. There is another important personage in our family, who as yet is unknown to the world. I merely designed myself as the morning star, to twinkle as the harbinger of his approaching orb. With suitable solemnity I now introduce to the public my revered and much beloved uncle Jehosophat Shadow, esq. This eminent

Digitized by Google

character whose life was devoted to letters, was peculiarly fond of the pages of Shakspeare. He was none of those vulgar readers that look for a meaning on the surface: on the contrary, he delved deep and found recondite pearls; he was an expert diver in the literary stream, and remained long under water. With the most painful and laborious industry, he investigated and explored the bottom, and opened every species of literary shelfish, in the hope of discovering some latent pearl in its belly. He laid it down as an axiom, that a genius so profound as Shakspeare would despise the thought of writing what could be discovered by ordinary minds, and maintained that literary as well as natural pearls possessed too much inherent value to swim upon the surface. Often have I seen his venerable locks bent over the page of Shakspeare, and his brows crooked with anxiety in investigating a passage, where persons of smaller intellects would have thought the meaning palpable, so that his nose which was remarkably prominent and sagacious, would be endangered by the contact. He acquired his blindness by black letter readings, but blindness was unable to destroy his vivida vis animi; for amid such stores of ancient learning as his tenacious memory had acquired, he could revolve the various passages and compare them with old ballads and venerable readings. His veneration for this species of literature was unbounded; there was not an old trunk within fifty miles of our dwelling, whose inside he had not scrutinized to discover the meaning of Shakspeare, and whenever the traces of an aged print could be discovered, his joy was unbounded. Fearful that the precious relic should receive still further injury by an attempt to remove it from its place, he purchased the trunk, and had the same carefully deposited in his study. In process of time these articles multiplied so fast, that his study was denominated the trunk-maker's shop. Never shall I forget the brilliancy of the figure by which in conversation with me, he testified his reverence for the bard of Avon. One critic, he exclaimed, compared Shakspeare to the sun, another to the moon, and another to the seven stars; but I say (mark, Mr. Editor, the emphasis of that *I*!) I say he resembles the sun, moon and seven stars shining all at once. This was said, sir, with eyes that beamed animation through his spectacles and pronounced with that authoritative and decisive tone that true genius, above all rivalry, can only hope to maintain. Sun, moon and stars, shining all at once! what splendor of fancy! And yet sir, I have reason to believe, and I have the assurance of

Digitized by Google

his own word, that this was not a preconcerted expression, but it burst involuntarily from his lips while meditating on the vastness of the subject. So pleased was my uncle himself with the thought, he declared, he felt at that moment all the grandeur of Shakspeare himself. Having thus fortified himself with old trunks, ballads, songs, and newspapers, he began to compare the passages of Shakspeare with their contents, with the most ardent and persevering industry. His conjectural emendations of certain passages of Shakspeare from such respectable documents are in the highest degree both plausible and ingenious. These alterations he has left in his papers behind him, and he has carefully referred to the trunk, ballad, or newspaper, that authorizes his reading. Sincerely do I lament that he did not live to finish the plan which he had laboured so assiduously to accomplish and publish an entire new edition of Shakspeare so corrected and amended. That the public may judge of his competency for that arduous office, I shall select from his venerable manuscripts certain passages so amended and the authority on which such amendment were made. Hamlet says,

"'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all."

This reading my uncle Jehosophat very properly rejected, because Shakspeare in another place is made to say,

"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,
And he but naked though lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."

Shakspeare, he observes, here intimates that conscience must be corrupt before its possessor is made a coward by it, which is not intimated in the line above quoted; and it was one of my uncle's high peculiarities always to take a line of Shakspeare by itself, and never to consider its connexion with precedent or subsequent lines when he sought for a meaning. He rendered the passage thus,

"'Tis conscience that makes *cowherds* of us all."

This alteration he made on the authority of an old print which inclosed a stick of sugarcandy that a child of his was at that time greedily devouring. The lines of the old ballad found on that invaluable paper which I have ever since carefully preserved were these,

"Conscience can make a cowherd smile
Bye baby bantling bye."

Digitized by Google

How peculiarly, exclaims my philosophic uncle in a note, are the most important things discovered! Who could be enabled to trace without this explanation the connexion between a line of Shakspeare and a roll of sugar candy. I will to give another of my uncle Johosophat's emendations. Shakspeare is made to say,

"How now, Hecate, you look angrily."

Nonsense exclaims my uncle Shadow in his marginal comment, it should be rendered

"How now he-cat, you look angrily."

This emendation he thought warranted by a reference to the play itself. In the very first scene we are presented with a "rat without a tail," and likewise with the "mewing of a brindled cat;" now why the cat should be in this plight or the rat does not appear in our ordinary lections. But my uncle supposes that this brindled cat (no other than the he-cat spoken of above) looked angrily because he had devoured only a moiety of the rat (the tail), and having an appetite for more looked indignant as cats do in such cases. This accounts for the mewing of the cat also. That this was the ancient habit of this house-animal is evident from a venerable authority no less than the old New England Primer, where it is stated that

"The cat does play
And after slay."

But such emendations are too precious to be bountifully scattered; and which, by being done may injure the sale of the meditated volume of my uncle's Shakspeare, now contemplated to be published.

SIMON SHADOW.

BULLS OR BLUNDERS, FAMILIAR TO THE ANCIENTS.

The confidence with which an endless variety of blunders have been attributed, as positive matters of fact, to the Irish, and, the almost exclusive appropriation of what are called blunders, to that people, while they divert the million, have been viewed with contempt by the wise few, who well know that such things are the growth of every soil, and by the learned, who have authority for saying, that they have been known in all ages. A Platonic philosopher, who flourished in the fifth century, has left behind him

Digitized by Google

many of those uttered in his time, which are now found printed in jest books and newspapers, as spick and span-new bulls, *lately* or *a few days ago*, uttered by some Irishman. A few of them, translated from the Greek, are laid before our readers.

EGYPTIAN BULLS, OF FOURTEEN HUNDRED YEARS OLD.
From the Facetiæ of Hierocles.

A silly fellow, endeavouring to swim, was nearly drowned, upon which he swore, that he never would venture into the water again till he could swim.

A foolish fellow, visiting a sick man, inquired about his health. The man could not answer him. At this he became angry, and said: "I hope soon to be sick myself, and then I won't answer you."

A foolish fellow, wishing to teach his horse to live upon little, gave him no food at all. The horse, of course, died of hunger. "I have met with a great loss," said the fool; "for just as I had taught him to live without food, he died."

A foolish fellow, having a house for sale, carried a brick, taken from it, as a specimen.

A foolish fellow, wishing to see how he looked when asleep, shut his eyes, and put a looking-glass to his face.

The same man, having got a cask of wine, sealed it up. His servant, however, made a hole in the bottom, and by that means stole part of the wine. The master was astonished to find the wine diminished, while the seals remained unbroken. A friend advised him to examine the bottom of the vessel. "Why you silly fellow," answered he, "the bottom part is safe; it is the upper part only that has been stolen."

A silly fellow, seeing some sparrows on a tree, came slily and shook the tree; opening his bosom at the same time, in expectation that the birds would fall into it.

The same foolish fellow, meeting another foolish fellow, said, "I was told that you were dead."—"You see (said the other) that can't be; for here I am."—"Yes, yes, (replied the first) but the man who told me so, is much more to be relied upon than you."

A silly fellow having been told that a crow would live two hundred years, said, he would try one, and satisfy himself whether this was true or not.

Being overtaken in a storm, and perceiving that every body on board was looking about for some means of safety, he laid hold on an anchor.

Digitized by Google

Meeting a man, whose twin-brother had lately died; "pray (said he) is it you, or your brother, that is dead?"

Upon the point of making a voyage, attended by his servants, he expressed a desire of making his will; and, perceiving his servants were apprehensive of danger, he desired them not to be uneasy, for he had left all of them their freedom.

Having occasion to cross a river, he went into the boat on horseback; observing, that he was in great haste.

Being in want of necessaries, he sold his books; about which time he writes to his father, and desires his congratulations, for that his books had already begun to afford him nourishment.

His son having gone into the army, previously to a battle, promised to bring off the head of one of the enemy. "You may return (said he) without a head, provided you do but come back safe and sound."

Having received a letter from a friend, desiring him to purchase some books, and having neglected it till it was too late, he excused himself, by saying, "You wrote to me, respecting the purchase of some books, but I never received your letter."

Hierocles, from whose "Facetiæ," the above bulls are extracted, was a philosopher of Alexandria, and lived about the year of our Lord 485. It is singular, that Mr. and Miss Edgeworth (the joint authors of the *Essay on Irish Bulls*) should either not have known, or not have noticed, this strong proof, that many a blunder had been charged upon the Irish nation very unjustly.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH WOMEN.

An English woman, unless she possesses strength of mind, a good understanding, a right idea of honour and virtue, and is likewise under the influence of a man of sense, who knows the world, and moreover how to govern the actions of his wife, will return home from the continent of Europe a coxcomb, both in dress and manners, and at least her *morals* corrupted, if not her *person*.

English women, in endeavouring to imitate the French and Italian women, have in general overshot their mark.* We see

* Should the superiority of the morals of the English women be questioned, certainly their superiority in decency of manners are indisputable, and this superiority is more conspicuous in women of a certain age, than in

Digitized by Google

now very little of the amiable bashfulness which was formerly their distinguishing characteristic. They do not consider that a French woman can use those freedoms with impunity, in *her own* country, which would stamp *even her* as a *courtesan*, if she was guilty of the same indecencies in England. Then how much worse does it appear in the *naturally* reserved English women, who throw off that native diffidence and modesty, for which they once were thought superior to the females of every other nation under the sun, and were admired by all foreigners. The truth is, a French woman knows *how far* to go, and the English woman knows *not where* to stop. The only reason that can be assigned for this difference is, the former will indulge herself with going great lengths in gallantry without at all indangering her heart; as for the most part, the French females are as much strangers to the finer feelings, as they are to sentiment; but the generality of the latter, who, on the contrary, possess exquisite sensibility, are always in danger of falling, whenever they permit *too far*, even those sort of innocent freedoms which are liable to make an impression on their heart. The person of an English woman is never in danger unless her heart is.

OBSERVATIONS ON PASSION.

By a French Author.

In every country in the world, mankind are more or less subject to passion, and its effects vary according to the climate and custom of the people. At Japan, for instance, a man rips open his own body in the presence of his adversary, who is obliged to do the same, on the pain of being looked upon as a coward. In Italy, a man poniards his enemy; this is much more convenient. In Spain, they plunge their swords into each other, with a degree of gravity enough to make a man expire with laughter. In France, they

the younger part of the sex. Englishmen have a sort of national regard for propriety, which deters a female from lingering on the confines of gallantry, when age has warned her to withdraw. But in France, antique dowagers, and faded spinsters, are all gay, laughing, *rouged* and indecent: so that, abating the subtraction of teeth, and admission of wrinkles, the disparity between ONE score and FOUR is not so great.

> Gay rainbow silks their mellow charms enfold,
> Nought of these beauties, but themselves, is old.

Digitized by Google

mount a coach together, exchange mutual civilities on the way, then alight in the "Bois de Boulogne," and with the utmost pleasantry imaginable, give one another the choice of having their throats cut, or their brains blown out. In England, they lay their hat, wig and clothes in the middle of the street, and bruise each other with their fists till they are tired. This effect of rage, the least silly of all of them, inasmuch as it is least dangerous, has its particular rules, from which the combatants must never deviate, and which, besides, the spectators always take care shall be observed. The combatants are forbidden to strike each other any where below the waistband. They must not pull one another's hair, if they happen to have any; nor must either strike his antagonist while he is down. They may kill one another if they can, by blows on the head and breast, and the victor is carried off in triumph by the enraptured multitude.

ANECDOTES OF WEST, THE PAINTER.

Mr. Editor. The following anecdotes of Mr. West I had from his own mouth, in a conversation which I enjoyed with him at his house, on the 15th of November, 1807. I put them to paper the instant I returned home; and, as whatever relates to the public character of a great man is public property, I trust I am not acting improperly in offering them for the enrichment of your miscellany.

I am, sir, your humble servant.

When Mr. West was painting his Death of Wolfe, an heroic picture, which was treated in so novel a manner that the artist thought to conceal it until its completion, archbishop Drummond, for whom Mr. West had before painted his Agrippina, accidentally came into the room, and was so greatly struck with that boldness of innovation which dressed an heroic action in modern attire, that, after some questions of doubt as to its success, he went for Sir Joshua Reynolds, and in less than an hour they were both in Mr. West's painting room. When Sir Joshua came in, he expressed the greatest alarm for Mr. West's reputation, warned him of his hazardous attempt, and told him the people of England would never be reconciled to heroes in coats and waistcoats. However, Mr. West said he would send for the archbishop and Sir Joshua when the picture was completed, and, if they condemned it

Digitized by Google

then, it should go into his closet; but that he had determined to venture upon a picture which would speak to the meanest intellects, to show some illiberal critics, who had before accused him of plagiary from old basso relievos, that he could paint from himself. When the picture was completed, Mr. West brought his friends to view it, according to his engagement. Sir Joshua stood silent before it about a quarter of an hour, and then very liberally told Mr. West that the picture would not only succeed, but would open a new era in painting.

Garrick offered to lie for Wolfe; but Mr. West refused the offer upon the plea that if the general were painted from the actor, the figure would inevitably be Garrick, and not Wolfe.

Mr. West expresses himself highly thankful that his studies in painting were unknown and unregarded as they were; for by that means he went to them without any of those prejudices which schools impart. When Mr. West went to Italy, so far was he from relishing the style of painting which then obtained there, that he saw and ridiculed its absurdities at once. At that time nothing was painted there but madonas and children, with perhaps two or three Cupids in the air; and, in England, no characters in an heroic picture were represented in any thing else than Roman or Gothic armour. Even Sir Joshua Reynolds, till after Mr. West's time, never painted a portrait but in a fancy dress. All this was altered by West's Death of Wolfe; and it was for this style of painting, and not for his Regulus (the first picture Mr. West painted for the king) or his Agrippina, that France eulogized Mr. West when they gave him that sumptuous entertainment upon admitting him a member of the National Institute.

Ricant, in his History of the Turks, says of them, that they so confound chronology and history, as to assert that Job was a *judge* in the court of King Solomon, and Alexander the Great one of his *generals*.

FRAGMENTS OF OLD ENGLISH POETRY.

THE PLAUDITE, OR END OF LIFE.

If after rude and boisterous seas,
My wearied pinnace here finds ease;

Digitized by Google

If so it be I've gain'd the shore
With safety of a faithful oar;
If, having run my bark on ground,
Ye see the aged vessel crown'd,
What's to be done, but on the sands
Ye dance, and sing, and now clap hands.
The first act's doubtful; but we say
It is the last commends the play.

THE CHANGES.

TO CORINNA.

Be not proud, but now incline
Your soft ear to discipline.
You have changes in your life,
Sometimes peace, and sometimes strife;
You have ebbs of face, and flows,
As your health or comes or goes;
You have hopes, and doubts, and fears,
Numberless as are your hairs.
You have pulses that do beat
High, and passions less of heat.
You are young, but must be old;
And, to these, you must be told,
Time, ere long, will come and flow
Loathed furrows in your brow;
And the dimness of your eye
Will no other thing imply,
But you must die
As well as I.

ON HIMSELF.

Here down my wearied limbs I'll lay,
My pilgrim's shaft, my weed of gray,
My palmer's hat, my scallop shell,
My cross, my cord, and all farewel!
For having now my journey done,
Just at the setting of the sun,
Here I have found a chamber fit,
(God and good friends be thank'd for it!)
Where if I can a lodger be,
A little while from tramples free,

Digitized by Google

At my uprising next, I shall,
If not requite, yet thank ye all.
Meanwhile, the holyrood hence fright
The fonter friend, and evil spright,
From scaring you or yours this night!

UPON BEN JONSON.

After the archpoet, Jonson, died,
The sock grew loathsome, and the buskin's pride,
Together with the stage's glory, stood
Each like a poor and pitied widowhood.
The cirque profan'd was, and all postures rack'd;
For men did strut, and stride, and stare, not act.
Then temper flew from words; and men did squeak,
Look red, and blow, and bluster, but not speak.
No holy rage, or frantic fires, did stir
Or flash about the spacious theatre;
No clap of hands, or shout, or praises-proof,
Did crack the playhouse sides, or cleave her roof.
Artless the scene was; and that monstrous sin
Of deep and arrant ignorance came in;
Such ignorance as theirs was, who once hiss'd
At thy unequall'd play, The Alchymist.
O! fie upon them! Lastly too, all wit
In utter darkness did, and still will, sit:
Sleeping the luckless age, till that she
Her resurrection has again with thee.

AN EPITAPH UPON A VIRGIN.

Here a solemn fast we keep,
While all beauty lies asleep.
Hush'd be all things; no noise here
But the toning of a tear,
Or a sigh of such as bring
Cowslips for her covering.

TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON.

Shut not too soon; the dull-ey'd night
Has not as yet begun
To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the sun.

Digitized by Google

No marigolds yet closed are,
No shadows great appear;
Nor doth the early shepherd's star
Shine like a sparkle here.
Stay but till my Julia close
Her life-begetting eye;
And let the whole world then dispose
Itself to live or die.

HIS ALMS.

Here I'll live,
And somewhat give
Of what I have
To those who crave
Little or much,
My alms is such;
But if my deal
Of oil or meal
Shall fuller grow,
More I'll bestow.
Mean time, be it
Ev'n but a bit,
Or else a crumb,
The scrip hath some.

THE WILLOW GARLAND.

A willow garland thou didst send,
Perfum'd, last day, to me,
Which did but only this portend,
I was forsook by thee.
Since so it is, I'll tell thee what:
To-morrow thou shalt see
Me wear the willow; after that,
To die upon the tree.
As beasts unto the altars go
With garlands drest; so I
Will, with my willow-wreath, also
Come forth and sweetly die.

Digitized by Google

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.—Mr. COOKE IN SHYLOCK.

[Continued from page 261.]

Before we proceed in our further observations on this play and its performance, we must mention a fact relating to it, which, by an oversight altogether unaccountable to ourselves, we omitted in its proper place, the outset of this criticism.

There is reason to believe, that from the time Lord Lansdowne gave to the stage his comedy of "The Jew of Venice," an alteration, or rather a debasement of Shakspeare's Merchant of Venice, the latter never was acted till the year 1741. The pedantic phantom of the unities had flapped its owl wings round his lordship's head, and he thought that by giving the play regularity in the plot, he should make a comedy superior to the original. But he was greatly deceived, and, from that which we now see it, made it almost as vapid a piece as any of his own nerveless, watergruel compositions. Yet the public being unaccustomed to witness the performance of the great original, received that miserable shadow of it, and were in the habit of seeing and approving of it in representation. What must those who know how to set a just value on this noble composition, as they see it performed by Cooke, think of the judgment and taste of Lord Lansdowne, and of the merit of his play, when they hear that Shylock was reduced in it to a mere subordinate character, and was always performed or rather farcified by some low buffoon of a comedian.

Macklin, who possessed a vigorous discriminating judgment, a fine natural taste, acute penetration, and with these a consciousness of his own strength which made him bold, resolved to revive the old comedy, and restore Shakspeare the stage, and the public to their rights in it. The bare attempt to substitute it in the place of a comedy so popular as the Jew of Venice, seemed to the manager, as well as to all who heard it, an act of temerity which could not fail to bring down upon Macklin's head the weight of public indignation. Quin, in the rude language he was accustomed to

Digitized by Google

use, under the abused name of bluntness, swore that Macklin ought to be hissed off the stage for his presumption; and Fleetwood, the manager, argued the matter in rational and friendly terms, observing that, even granting the original to be as much superior to the alteration of it as Macklin thought it, still it would be considered as arrogance in him to persevere in his intention, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Quin, to the high authority of Lord Lansdowne, and to the public judgment itself, which had given the stamp of approbation to The Jew of Venice. He earnestly intreated him, therefore, to abandon his project, and strenuously urged the probability that his character as an actor, and his favour with the public, would become the victims of his rashness and obstinacy.

Sustained by his own native vigour, Macklin stood unmoved by every argument and persuasion, remained firm to his purpose, and declared that, be the consequence to himself what it might, he would run the hazard. The thing was right to be done, and if it should fail, the fault would be that of the public: it should not, he said, be his. Accordingly the play was put in rehearsal. Macklin, who had studied the part of Shylock with profound attention, made the players stick close, as he himself did, to the text of Shakspeare throughout. During the rehearsal, however, he took care not to disclose the manner in which he intended to personate the character, by a look, a tone, a gesture, or an attitude; but merely repeated the lines in the unimpassioned tone of one reading an advertisement in a newspaper. This threw new obstacles in his way, and occasioned a multitude of vexatious remarks and objections from the players who, one and all, peremptorily declared, Quin, who played Antonio being at their head too, that Macklin's acting alone would spoil the performance. But he, who had from the beginning had a view to the character, as a ladder by which he should mount to the summit of his profession, being convinced that it afforded unbounded scope for the display of his talents, and for capital acting, secretly derided their observations, kept his mind to himself, and brought every thing to a state perfectly fit for representation. The comedy of the Merchant of Venice, *as written by Shakspeare*, was announced. And as the whole strength of the company was given to it, the house was crowded full in every part; some coming from curiosity, some from liking to the notion of Macklin, and to support him, and some to express their disapprobation. Quin, Milward, Mills, Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Pritchard

Digitized by Google

performed in it. When will the Merchant of Venice be so well filled again?

In the whole history of the stage, there is not to be found one crisis more interesting than this; one more worthy of a minute relation.

Fleetwood the manager was in a most painful state of apprehension and anxiety. The actors were chuckling at the prospect of Macklin's disgrace. Macklin himself, though firm as a rock, was far from being at ease. He knew he was right; but the audience—ay, there was the rub! It was a full, a tremendous tribunal, and the judges might be partial, perverted, inlisted on the other side. The old gentleman has often talked of his feelings at that juncture, as surpassing all that he had ever experienced in his life.

The whole is so admirably described by Macklin's relation and biographer, that we think it would be a pity to take it out of his words, the purport of which he unquestionably had collected from the veteran himself, long before his death.

"The curtain was drawn up, and the performers who had to open the play went on, and were received in the usual way. But when Shylock and Bassanio entered, in the third scene, there was an awful, a solemn silence. A pin might have been heard, if dropt upon the stage. Nothing, Mr. Macklin has declared, ever affected him so much as the coolness that was observed by the audience at his entrance. He had been then, for several years, a great favourite with the town, and the audience had been accustomed to greet him on his first entrance, with repeated plaudits. We shall leave it to the reader to conceive the state of Mr. Macklin's feelings at this juncture; for it is impossible to describe them. Not a hand moved to encourage him; on the contrary, every thing around him seemed to conspire towards his discomfiture. The terrified looks of the manager, the malicious sneers of the actors, and the tremendous silence of a brilliant and crowded audience, all united to strike him with terror, and confound him with dismay.

Notwithstanding all this, he approached with Bassanio, who solicits a loan of three thousand ducats, on the credit of Antonio—still not a whisper could be heard in the house. On the entrance of Antonio, the Jew makes the audience acquainted with his motives of antipathy to the merchant: Mr. Macklin had no sooner delivered this speech than the audience burst out into a thunder of applause, and in proportion as he afterwards proceeded to exhibit

Digitized by Google

and mark the malevolence, the villany, and the diabolical atrocity of the character, so in proportion did the admiring and delighted audience testify their approbation of the actor's astonishing merit, by still louder and louder plaudits and acclamations, to the end of the play. Never was a performer's triumph more complete; never were enemies and opponents more confounded and abashed; never was manager more agreeably surprised. The sudden, unexpected, and happy catastrophe of that night's representation conferred on Mr. Macklin immortal fame as an actor, and transmitted to posterity another proof of the amazing genius and wonderful talents of the unrivalled Shakspeare. The play was repeated again and again, with unbounded approbation. In short, it ran nineteen nights successively, the last of which was appropriated to Mr. Macklin's benefit."

This performance so forcibly struck a gentleman who was present, that, in the enthusiasm of his feelings, he exclaimed aloud,

> THIS is the Jew
> That Shakspeare drew.

We have the evidence of Macklin himself, as well as the general hearsay evidence of the times, for saying, that the person who paid this elegant and applicable compliment was no less a man than the great bard of Twickenham, Alexander Pope. Some persons of unnecessary, officious scrupulosity, however, have questioned the probability of this, as an anachronism; but let it be remembered, that the first representation of Shylock was on the 14th of February, 1741, and that Pope lived to the 30th of May, 1744; that is, three years and nearly three months after.

From that time, "The Merchant of Venice" has kept possession of the stage, and "The Jew of Venice" been very properly exiled from it. Indeed, what can be thought of the taste or judgment of the noble author of the latter, when it is stated that, so far from being made detestable, his lordship's Shylock is made a droll, and perfectly laughable. For instance, being at supper at Bassanio's, he is seated at a table separate from the christian company, in conformity with the supposed tenets of his tribe; and drinks to his *money* as to his only friend.

Macklin was the first player to whom the dramatic representation of Great Britain stood indebted for the happy alteration that has taken place in the costume of the stage, which Mr. Kemble

Digitized by Google

has the credit of having followed up to its present state; and which, though still occasionally inconsistent,* is infinitely more rational than it was under the regime of Mr. Garrick, during whose management the absurdities of the stage dress, if enumerated in detail, would make a very long article. Macklin was the first who changed the dress of Macbeth from scarlet and gold in the modern cut, a three-cocked hat, a long plaited military queue with a bunch at the end of it, and by way of royal dignity, after his investment at Scone, a large bag and solitaire, to the Scottish kilt, hose, and plaid.

When he had fixed upon playing Shylock, he made it his business to go frequently to the Exchange, and enter into conversation with Mediterranean traders, from whom he learned that, by an ordinance of the republic of Venice, the Jews were compelled to wear red hats as a distinguishing badge of their tribe, and from that time he always wore one, in the character of Shylock.

Of the plays of Shakspeare which have undergone deterioration from the barbarous hands of alterers and innovators, we know not one, the spoliations on which, auditors of taste and feeling have greater cause to regret, than this of the Merchant of Venice. According to Shakspeare, the second act opens with a scene, which by a license no pretence can justify, has been expunged, though it is exquisitely beautiful. All our readers know the story of Portia and the caskets. Of the many suiters who come to try their fate, Bassanio is the only one which the pruning knife of the London managers has left visible to the audience; and Mrs. Inchbald's and other modern editions of the plays follow, not the author's text, but the

* For instance, our Othellos of late wear turbans. In the name of wonder why? Though a Moor by birth, Othello is a Venetian general; and to the Venetians, every thing Mahometan was ever alien and abhorrent. Their customs, their laws, their prejudices forbade any innovation in their military uniform; more particularly a mussulman innovation. Yet, while Cassio and Iago, the officers of his corps, his lieutenant and ancient, or ensign, wear hats, in the Venetian costume, Othello is ornamented with a turban. Is it out of compliment to the OTTOMITES he is sent to overthrow, or to the malignant and the turban'd Turk, that beat a Venetian, and traduced the state? This is Kemble all over; this is studying *the picturesque* with a vengeance. Mr. Garrick once took it in his head to play Othello, and figured away in an entire Moorish dress. And that absurdity it was that occasioned the facetious Quin to call him DESDEMONA'S LITTLE BLACK BOY WITH THE TEA KETTLE.

Digitized by Google

prompter's books. Thus, nine in ten at least of those who read the play are not only deprived of the benefit of some of the most excellent passages of the poet, but are shut out from the knowledge that such passages ever had existence. Let the reader judge whether we are correct or otherwise, from the following specimens. Morochius, a prince of Morocco, who is one of Portia's suiters, opens the second act with the following charming speech:

Mor. "Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour, and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear,
The best regarded virgins of our clime
Have lov'd it too:—I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Portia. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice directions of a maiden's eyes:
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing,
But, if my father had not scanted me,
And hedg'd me by his will, to yield myself
His wife, who wins me by the means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have look'd on yet,
For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you;
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets,
To try my fortune. By this cimiter,—
That slew the Sophy, and a Persian prince,
That won three fields of sultan Solyman,—
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady: but, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice,
Which is the better man? The greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand.
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,

Digitized by Google

Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Since we have entered on the subject of those excisions from the play, we will go on with it, and, by quoting the parts cut out, show how much is lost to the admirers of poetry. Morochius being brought to the caskets, ponders upon the choice he shall make in the following speech:

Some god direct my judgment!—Let me see,
I will survey the inscriptions back again:—
What says this leaden casket?
" Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath."
Must give!—For what?—For lead?—Hazard for lead?
This casket threatens: men that hazard all,
Do it in hope of fair advantages;
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give, nor hazard aught for lead.
—What says the silver with her virgin hue?
" Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves."
—As much as he deserves!—Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady;
And yet to be afeard of my deserving,
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve!—Why, that's the lady;
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
But, more than these, in love I do deserve her:
What if I stray'd no farther, but close here?—
Let's see once more this saying grav'd in gold.
" Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire."
Why that's the lady; all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come
To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint.
The Hyrcanian deserts, and the wasty wilds
Of wide Arabia, are now as thoroughfares
For princes to come view fair Portia;
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head.
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like, that lead contains her?—'Twere damnation

Digitized by Google

To think so base a thought; it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think, in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought!—Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin, that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold; but that's insculp'd upon:
But here an angel, in a golden bed,
Lies all within.——Deliver me the key;
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may.
Portia. Here, take it, prince, and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours.
Mor. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll!—I'll read the writing.

" All that glitters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told;
Many a man his life hath sold,
But my outside to behold;
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been inscroll'd:
Fare you well; your suit is cold."

In this speech of Morochius there are some delightful effusions of poetic fancy; and the lines found inscrolled in the casket contain some noble moral truths, which ought not to be lost to the audience. But still superior to these, in the loftiness of the flights and truth of characteristic expression, as well as in sterling moral wisdom, are the speeches of the prince of Arragon, another suiter of the fair Portia. Being conducted by her to the caskets, he opens his observations with the pertinent, unceremonious solemnity of a high Spaniard.

I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which of the caskets 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage; lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you, and begone.
Portia. To these injunctions every one doth swear,
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Digitized by Google

Arrag. And so have I addrest me:—fortune, now
To my heart's hope!—Gold, silver, and base lead.
"Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath:"
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest?—Ha!—let me see—
"Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire."
What many men desire!—That many may be meant
Of the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits,
And rank me with the barbarous multitude.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house,
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
"Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves;"
And well said too: for who shall go about
To cozen fortune, and be honourable,
Without the stamp of merit?—Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not deserv'd corruptly! And that clear honour
Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare?
How many be commanded that command?
How much low peasantry would then be gleaned
From the true seed of honour, and how much honour
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,
To be new-varnish'd?—Well, but to my choice:
"Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves."
I will assume desert; give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

Portia. Too long a pause for that which you find here.

Arrag. What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule?—I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves!
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize?—Did I deserve no better?

Portia. To offend and judge are distinct offices, and
Of opposed natures.

Digitized by Google

Arrag. What is this?

"The fire seven times tried this;
Seven times tried that judgment is
That did never choose amiss;
Some there be that shadows kiss,
Such have but a shadow's bliss;
There be fools alive, I wis,
Silver'd o'er, and so was this;
Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head:
So begone, sir; you are sped."

The more the nature and importance of these passages are considered, with a view to the author's intention, as well as to the entirety of the drama, the more cause there will appear to wonder at the motives of those who first set the example of disfiguring it, and to condemn the taking of such an injudicious, unwarrantable liberty. It would not be truth to say they are digressive. The play consists of two actions, founded on two separate, remote original stories—that of the bond for the pound of flesh, and that of the caskets, which stories Shakspeare has so conducted as to make them mutually aid each other, but each of which is so constructed as to unfold itself. The characters of the two suiters, Morochius and Arragon, are as necessary to the full development of the casket plot, as Tubal or Launcelot to the accomplishment of the plot of the bond. This appears not only from the chasm which the excision of them makes in the progressive explanation of the story, but from the care and amount of mind bestowed upon them by the poet: for where has he exhibited more studious art, where displayed more captivating or affecting sentiment? In the scenes with those suiters the fable is cleared up in a gradual order calculated to unfold to the audience, in a natural way, the particular provision in the will of Portia's father, by which she is bound on the subject of marriage. By the two several disappointments of those two suiters, the mind is better prepared for the successful adventure of the third, and the contents of all the caskets are thereby laid open as they should be to the audience. But how is it, as now acted?—The story, of itself sufficiently improbable, is rendered more difficult of belief and unintelligible by being left without explanation till Bassanio comes to the caskets; when scraps, taken from the speeches of Morochius and the prince of Arragon, are, through

Digitized by Google

his mouth, lugged in by the head and shoulders, to explain what ought to have been explained before.

Moreover, it is evident that Shakspeare intended to inforce one great moral sentiment by the three different choices, and to make the speeches of the three suiters the vehicles of it; any one of them being taken away, the poet's intention is frustrated; the plan is interrupted; and the moral is left incomplete. The design of the poet is manifestly this:—the disappointment of Morochius, who chooses the golden casket, intimates that outward show and ornament are treacherous and deceptive, or as Bassanio afterwards says,

The world is still deceiv'd by ornament;

the disappointment of the second shows what fate that man deserves who, though wise enough to despise external ornament, is yet enslaved to vanity, in the excess of which Arragon flatters himself that because the silver casket promises that he who chooses it shall meet what he deserves, he must necessarily succeed on account of his deserts; while the choice of the third, who selects, for its plainness, the lead, which rather threatens than promises, accomplishes the moral. Perhaps a more beautiful but keen satire on vanity never was imagined than that of the prince of Arragon's finding the expected reward of his great merit nothing more than a fool's head.

They, who have thus mutilated the Merchant of Venice, deserve to find, in their casket, a fool's head, with a bobbin tied round the neck of it.

Whether the foregoing observations are founded in truth or not, may, without difficulty, be inferred from the speech of Bassanio when commenting on the caskets. After having meditated on them for some time, he breaks out abruptly—

So may the outward shows be least themselves.
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple, but assumes
Some mark of virtue on its outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts are yet as false

Digitized by Google

As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk?
And these assume but valour's baser part
To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchas'd by the weight;
And therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it:
So are those crisped, snaky, golden locks,
Which make such wanton gambols in the wind,
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To intrap the wisest. Therefore thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threat'nest than dost promise aught,
Thy *plainness* moves me more than eloquence,
And here choose I;—Joy be the consequence.

Instead of the fine scene between Morochius and Portia, a farcical one between Launcelot, the Jew's servant and his father, old Gobbo, opens the second act. This, though full of whim and exquisitely comical, has no other use but to raise a laugh, introduce Launcelot to our acquaintance, and announce his determination to leave the Jew's service. Upon their disappearance another droll—one of a more refined kind, makes himself and his humour known to the audience, soliciting Bassanio to let him accompany him to Belmont; a request which Bassanio grants upon condition, that he will *allay with some cold drops of modesty his skipping spirit*, which Gratiano returns with so very comical a profession of gravity, that we cannot resist the inclination we have to present it to the reader.

Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer books in my pocket, look demurely;
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say, AMEN;

Digitized by Google

Use all the observance of civility,
Like one studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

The scene between Shylock, Jessica, and Launcelot, serves to unfold the domestic manners of the Jew. His doubts and hesitation about going forth to supper; his misgivings of some mischief brewing towards his rest, because he dreamed of money bags; his alarm at hearing that there are to be masks abroad; his judaical warning to his daughter not "*to gaze on christian fools with varnished faces*," nor "let the *sound* of *shallow foppery* enter his sober house;" his grudging animadversion on Launcelot's gormandizing, and the pleasure he expresses at the reflection that the *huge feeder*, as he calls him, will help to waste the money Bassanio borrows from him, are circumstantially and minutely characteristic.

The patch is kind enough; but a *huge feeder*,
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild cat; drones hive not with me:
Therefore I part with him; *and part with him*
To one I would have him help to waste
His borrow'd purse.

These minute touches and delicate strokes of the pencil are the things which distinguish the portraits of Shakspeare from all others: yet, for drawing forth the powers of an actor, this scene is rather languid. To make it striking, the actor must possess that strongly marking energy of utterance and expression, which Mr. Cooke enjoys in so very extraordinary a degree.

We have heretofore observed, that there is nothing in which our wonderful poet displays the superiority of his genius more than in contriving rare and extraordinary conjunctures for the purpose of bringing out his characters in the most full and prominent relief. In the Merchant of Venice he so dexterously manages his events, however dissimilar or even contrary to each other, as to make them, apparently by accident, unite precisely at the crisis in which the concurrent operation of their opposite effects upon the person that is to be moved by them, will elicit the strongest indications of character. Thus the intelligence of his daughter's having robbed him and eloped, and of Antonio's ships being all wrecked, reach Shylock at the same time; and, as they happen to be mentioned, alternately harrow up his heart with grief and rage, or fill him with savage hope and diabolical joy.

Digitized by Google

With his usual art, Shakspeare prepares the audience for this extraordinary exhibition by a short but felicitous scene between Salarino and Salanio, who not only state Antonio's loss and deplore his hazardous situation in language which displays the amiable character of Antonio to great advantage, but describe the distraction of the Jew at his daughter's elopement in very diverting terms.

Salarino. I never heard a passion so confus'd
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
"My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a christian! O my christian ducats!
Justice! The law!—My ducats and my daughter!
A sealed bag—two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!"
Let good Antonio look he keeps his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Shylock's joining Salarino and Salanio just at the very moment they are speaking of him, his ducats, and his daughter, is happily imagined; and never yet was there conceived any thing more appropriate than the agonies of grief and the distraction he exhibits on the mention of his loss on the one hand, and the hellish antipathy he discloses to Antonio on the other;—never were there such natural transitions from frantic sorrow, distraction, and despair, to coldblooded malevolence,—from invectives on his daughter to denunciations of vengeance on Antonio, as in this and the subsequent scene with Tubal. These we think the finest parts in the play for affording scope to the talents of an actor, and in these Mr. Cooke evinced the same superiority of talents that he does in Richard, in Iago, in Pierre—in every thing. We must here again repeat, that his performance of Shylock in America has in no one instance equalled that which we saw in London. The first time we witnessed his playing the Jew was the first night he ever played it in the British metropolis: it was the first time, too, that we had the pleasure of seeing him either on or off the stage, and it was for that reason perhaps that we have considered his Shylock the best acting of his we have seen—his Kitely excepted. The whole audience seemed to think as we did; for, not contented with the usual marks of approbation, they absolutely huzzaed, and, in all the transports people show when overjoyed at some great and unexpected acquisition, thundered "*bravo, bravo,*" from all parts of the house. Indeed,

Digitized by Google

Cooke on that night so far outran all expectation, that the people seemed half frantic with enjoyment. When in the answer to Salarino, who asks him "do you hear whether Antonio have any losses at sea or no?" Shylock replies,

"There I have another bad match: a bankrupt prodigal, who scarce dare show his head on the Rialto: a beggar that used to come so snug upon the mart—*let him look to his bond.* He was wont to call me usurer—*let him look to his bond.* He was wont to lend money on a christian courtesy—*let him look to his bond!!*"

The breaks of Cooke were masterly; and the inexorable murderous bent of the black heart of Shakspeare's Jew was not less strongly expressed in the manner of uttering "*let him look to his bond,*" than it was in the whetting of the knife in the last scene. Yet that itself was surpassed by the expression of savage delight with which he received from Tubal the account of Antonio's losses.

Tubal. Other men have ill luck too;—Antonio, as I heard in Genoa——
Shylock. What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck?

The impatience of a ravening appetite for the blood of the merchant was frightfully expressed by the sudden, rapid interruption, and the abrupt repetition of the words, aided by the harsh grating of Cooke's voice—while the significant eagerness of his ghastly looks and the clawing of his fingers presented to the classic mind the imbodied image of the divine Mantuan's harpies,

—— uncæque manus, et pallida semper
Ora fame.

And when Tubal, proceeding with his story, says, that Antonio

Hath an argosie cast away coming from Tripolis,—

Shylock breaks forth,

I THANK GOD! I THANK GOD! IS IT TRUE? IS IT TRUE?
Tubal. I spoke with some of the sailors that escap'd the wreck.
Shylock. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news;——Ha, ha, ha!—where? in Genoa?

The gloomy transport, the savage exultation, the ecstasy approaching to hysterical passion expressed in his laugh, and the sanguinary rancour with which he burst forth into "*I am very glad of it—I'll plague him—I'll torture him—I am glad of it,*" were so natural and irresistibly impressive, that a person of a violent imagination and strong sensibility might well be startled if not appalled at it, as a circumstance of reality.

Digitized by Google

But of all the passages in this part of the play, or indeed in any other that we have seen, his delivery of that speech in which the Jew pleads to Salarino and Salanio his own wrongs and those of his tribe in vindication of his purpose, seemed to us to display this great actor's talents to most advantage; more particularly, when we first saw him in the character.

Salanio. If he forfeit, thou wilt not have his flesh—what's that good for?

Shylock. "To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me of half a million: laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated my enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is?

All this Cook urged in a highly wrought climax of earnest, passionate ratiocination, rising from vehement complaint to sharp expostulation, and then to a bold assertion of the rights of his tribe as human beings; in which he exhibited some as happy discriminations as any we have ever had occasion to eulogize in this most extraordinary master of his art; and which in the part of Shylock gives him precedence to all other actors—even to Macklin himself. Having accomplished a climax of passion, which we have never seen equalled, and beyond which it appears impossible for human powers to raise it, his heart seemed big, almost to suffocation, with his feelings; he made a momentary pause. Struggling emotions seemed to half stifle his utterance. His voice sunk to a tone that denoted poignant sensibility; and in a soft pathetic strain expressive of a harassed suffering spirit, he continued to say, "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?" When, again resuming his vindictive shape, he said, in that fiendlike undertone, with which he at will can infuse the spirit of the devil into his words, "*And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?*" We doubt whether there ever was an actor who, in any passage of any play, could boast of more sterling merit or more perfect originality than Mr. Cooke showed, in this fine speech. The impression it first made upon us is too deep ever to be forgotten; and it is bound still more lastingly to our remembrance by a circumstance that occurred at the time. A gentleman of rare taste and rich intellectual endowments, now a thriving member of the bar of Westminster Hall, sitting beside us, at the first night's representation of the Jew by Cooke, having heard him deliver this

Digitized by Google

speech, emphatically said, "With a few more such speeches, so uttered, this Jew would make converts of all good christians."

Though Shakspeare has furnished the Jew with some very plausible arguments, the appeal to our sympathies, in the speech just adverted to, owed more to the power of the player than to the design of the poet, who has certainly exerted all his art to make the character perfectly detestable; and this is the reason why, acknowledging the general superiority of Macklin's Shylock to Cooke's, we have received more pleasure from the latter. Macklin's delivery of that speech was the infuriate ebullition of long treasured arguments of hatred, malice, and revenge; Cooke's the spontaneous effusion of a heart, malicious and revengeful, no doubt; but at the same time bleeding with the wounds of a quick and poignant sensibility to personal and national wrong. That Shakspeare intended Shylock to be perfectly detestable, is proved not only by the Jew's own words and actions, but by the characters of those opposed to him; for while he is displayed in every hateful shape; as cunning, cautious, irascible, servile, fawning, and cruel, Antonio and Bassanio are trimmed out, in contrast to him, with every private virtue: even Lorenzo is amiable. Gratiano's lively temper is finely opposed to Shylock's gloominess, selfishness, and subtlety; and the very buffoonery of Launcelot is made to lighten on the Jew, and illustrate his baseness. What an exquisite appeal is made against him, to every feeling heart, in the second scene of the third act!—Let us consider it.

Bassanio having, to the pleasure of all parties, chosen the fortunate casket, nothing appears to stand between him and perfect felicity: the cup of joy is at his lips, and all are in full measure sympathizing with him, when, unexpectedly, every thing is reversed; and a black thunder storm rises—in the shape of the Jew—and darkens their whole horizon. We know nothing which, for delicacy, tenderness, true pathos, and faithful friendship, surpasses the letter of Antonio, disclosing his dangerous circumstances to his friend. "Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow "cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and, "since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are clear-"ed between you and me, if I might but see you at my death: Not-"withstanding, use your pleasure: If your love do not persuade you "to come, let not my letter." Bassanio's feeling, also, shows him worthy of such friendship, and places him in a state of happy contrast

Digitized by Google

with the Jew, as does the charming Portia's too, her. As no man ever possessed equal powers for painting human villany in its most loathsome deformity, so no one has ever exhibited human goodness in such lovely colours as Shakspeare; and it is observable, that in the latter he seems least to labour, shows least art, and is ever most plain, express, and simple. For the letter of Bassanio we should in vain search for an equal among the most exquisite specimens of the simple epistolary style. A full match to it, but in another style, is Bassanio's delicate and pathetic manner of unfolding his unhappy affairs to Portia.

> O, sweet Portia,
> Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
> That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
> When I did first impart my love to you,
> I freely told you, all the wealth I had
> Ran in my veins—I was a gentleman;
> And then I told you true: And yet, dear lady,
> Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
> How much I was a braggart: When I told you
> My state was nothing, I should then have told you
> That I was worse than nothing: For indeed
> I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
> Engag'd my friend to his mere enemy,
> To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
> The paper as the body of my friend,
> And every word in it a gaping wound,
> Issuing lifeblood.

Nor is the following tribute of Bassanio to his friend's character less delightful:

> The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
> The best conditioned and unwearied spirit
> In doing courtesies; and one in whom
> The ancient Roman honour more appears
> Than any that draws breath in Italy.

These and such as these are the models to which a country's youth should be directed, whether the object be to cultivate and improve the understanding, or to purify and amend the heart. Let it be observed that, still true to his text, Shakspeare's drift is to enhance the moral deformity of Shylock by contrast and juxtaposition with the most exalted virtue. For there is but one line between this

Digitized by Google

lovely picture of Antonio, and a hellish one of the Jew, given by Salanio, who brings him the letter:

> Never did I know
> A creature that did bear the shape of man,
> So keen and greedy to confound a man.

Portia's amiable and generous conduct equals every conception that the most warm and gallant imagination can conceive of female excellence; and the slighting manner in which she mentions the three thousand ducats, at once bespeaks her wealth and munificence:

> What, no more?
> Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
> Double six thousand, and then treble that,
> Before a friend of this description
> Shall lose a hair through my Bassanio's fault.
> First go with me to church and call me wife;
> And then away to Venice to your friend;
> For never shall you lie by Portia's side
> With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
> To pay the debt twenty times over.

Thus admirably has our necromantic poet prepared every auditor to meet the Jew at trial with feelings suitable to the occasion—feelings of pity and alarm for the good Antonio, and of abhorrence and apprehension of the sanguinary Shylock.

In marking the character of the Jew, Shakspeare has made a climax in his relentlessness, so natural that the probability of the story appears in every scene to gain new strength. His first wish to *catch Antonio on the hip*, may be a transient effusion of anger, and no more; his obtaining the bond may be only an expedient to terrify the merchant, and demonstrate to him in the end that he had wronged the Jew: his after expressions may be only the ungovernable effusions of a rancour which yet would melt away before compunction when the execution of the bloody purpose approached; and the heart would still persuade itself that no man could be so remorseless as to persevere in a purpose so diabolical. Even at the opening of the trial the duke expresses as much—

> Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
> That thou but leadst this fashion of thy malice
> To the last hour of act; and then, 'tis thought,
> Thou'lt show thy mercy.

Digitized by Google

In order to slope the way to the Jew's inexorable determination to have his pound of flesh by judicial decree, which would else appear improbable, the monster is introduced to the audience, followed by the unfortunate merchant, whom the very jailer, in pity, brings abroad to solicit mercy, which the unrelenting monster not only refuses, but chides the jailer for letting him abroad: and here it is observable that, to make the Jew's motives more odious, he is made, as he proceeds in his bloody career, to lose sight of the cause of his tribe, and to bottom his vengeance solely on his own personal feelings and Antonio's benevolence to others.

> Tell me not of mercy;—
> This is the fool that lent out money *gratis!*—
> Jailer, look to him.
>
> Thou call'dst me dog before thou had'st a cause;
> But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs;
> The duke shall grant me justice.
>
> I'll have my bond—I will not hear thee speak;
> I'll have my bond, and therefore speak no more.
> I'll not be made a soft and dull-ey'd fool,
> To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
> To christian intercessors. Follow not;
> I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond.

To know Cooke's general acting; to have heard his voice, attentively viewed his manner, and noted his vigorous emphasis, would be enough to assure even those who have never seen him play this character, that every word he utters in this scene answers the most sanguine expectations. It is the trial scene however in which, next to the first scene of the third act already descanted upon, he blazed out with the most astonishing powers. In this, though he has much to say, he does not utter a line in which the most fastidious critic could imagine an improvement: though he has much to do, every action is perfect, characteristic, and impressive,—some indeed astonishing, novel and delightful.

To the duke, who, in a humane and pathetic speech, exhorts him to be merciful, Shylock returns an answer, in which he boldly avows his cruel determination, and attempts to justify it on the ground of antipathy:

> So I can give no reason, nor I will not,
> More than a lodg'd hate and certain loathing
> I bear Antonio.

Digitized by Google

And to make his wickedness more complicated, he pleads an oath, by which he had sworn to have the pound of flesh, as one of his reasons for excluding all remorse:

> And by our holy sabbath have I sworn
> To have the due and forfeit of my bond.

And again:

> An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heav'n;
> Shall I lay perjury on my soul?
> No, not for Venice.

This kind of sophistry, or as the sagacious author of Hudibras shrewdly remarks, to

> Compound for sins they are inclin'd to,
> By damning those they have no mind to,

is an expedient to which, we fear, bad people too often have recourse. To make an overscrupulous adherence to the letter of religion a pretext for violating its ordinances in more important things, is adding profaneness to crime. Even this, Shakspeare has added to the amount of Shylock's guilt, with excellent moral effect, too. For who but must forever renounce the sin of sanctioning vice with the pretence of piety, that hears Shylock justify the perpetration of murder, by his fear of committing perjury?

To particularize every beauty struck out by Cooke in this scene would require us to be much more minute than we can be. Every line he uttered would be intitled to its particular eulogium. We must therefore confine ourselves to our prescribed limits; and indeed we yield to the necessity with great reluctance and painful self-denial. A few of those passages, however, whose novelty, as well as singular perfection, most forcibly struck us, we will not deny ourselves the pleasure of enumerating.

In every part Mr. Cooke performs, his by-play, as it is called, would give him a decided preference over all other actors; not only because it is always just, significant, exact, and illustrative of the poet, but because it never suffers the audience to be, for one moment, inattentive to the actor, or forgetful of the character: besides which, it often relieves us from the tedium of bad passages and bad performers. In the trial scene, his by-play is extremely beautiful and characteristic;—the studious and apparently reverential attention with which he listened to Portia's nervous exhortation

Digitized by Google

to mercy, and his admirable dumb show comments upon it, were correct and sterling. In these we cannot say that Macklin was inferior to him, only because Macklin never attempted them. On the contrary, many years after the veteran had made the part as well and as universally understood as it was on the day he left the stage, a point of cavil with the critics continued to be this: that the words

> We do pray for mercy,
> And that same prayer doth teach us all
> To render deeds of mercy,

having an evident reference to the Lord's prayer, ought not to be urged by way of persuasive to a Jew, as they would rather have a tendency to exasperate than mollify him: but the genius of Cooke not only has superseded that objection, but converted it to a most interesting and impressive beauty. When Portia uttered the lines,

> It is an attribute to GOD himself,
> And earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When mercy seasons justice.

At the name of God, Cooke bowed with pious reverence, while awe was visibly depicted in his face. The effect upon the audience of this solemn humiliation at the name of Jehovah was astonishing—electrical—and so general, that one would be led to imagine there was not a being in the house who escaped it,—and it would seem as if every heart was prostrate and every body involuntarily bent in unison. But when Portia conjured him to mercy in the sacred terms of "The Lord's Prayer," he shook his head, and waved his hand, intimating in the most significant and forcible manner imaginable, his rejection of the authority by which she invoked him.

In his servile praise, and affected rapturous admiration of the decision of the "wise and upright judge," Portia, he was inimitably fine. So too in the eager, abrupt, and decisive manner in which when Portia desires him to let her tear the bond, he, as if apprehensive that she will tear it, says, "When it is paid according to the tenor."

Another beauty arose upon Portia's proposing that he should have a surgeon by, to stop the wounds, lest Antonio should bleed to death. Neither directly assenting to nor refusing this, Shylock refers to the bond: "Is it so nominated in the bond?"—But instead of putting the interrogation, as if it were a thing of which he was

Digitized by Google

ignorant, Cooke's doubt about the matter, his question, and his scrutinizing examination of the writing as if to see whether it contained any such provision, were palpably *affected*, and done as an evasion; and the decisive, sneering, triumphant enjoyment he expressed in his look, and still more in his chuckle, when, returning the paper to Portia, he said, "I cannot find it; it is not in the bond," were intitled to the warmest approbation that it is possible for criticism to bestow.

As to the whetting of the knife, it is a mark so very broad, that a great player like Cooke can derive no great credit from hitting it: every tolerable Shylock can do that. Two points, therefore, and only two, remain to be mentioned. The first in order is his manner of saying the words

> I take *this* offer then—pay the bond—thrice,
> And let the christian go.

Instead of saying it tamely, as all other Shylocks have done, "*pay the bond thrice*," he divided the word "*thrice*" from the preceding words "*pay the bond*," and uttered it with a marked emphasis, as if pinning them down to that sum, and providing against their forgetting or excluding him from the offer they had made.—The second was the melancholy groan he uttered, and the horrible expression, compounded of mortification, malice and despair, which marked his face when he left the court. Of these beauties we would fain speak as they deserve, and as we think of them, but wanting adequate words, we choose to sum up our opinion in one short sentence, THEY WERE COOKE ALL OVER.

PORTRAIT OF COOKE IN SIR PERTINAX.

WITH the pleasure it must naturally give us to gratify our friends, and the pride we ought to feel in being at all instrumental in bringing extraordinary genius under the public eye, we accompany this month's number of the Mirror with a full length portrait of Mr. Cooke in Sir Pertinax, done by Master LESLIE. It is a fact we ought to mention, because it is highly creditable to the talents of this extraordinary youth, that when his former drawing (that of Richard, which appeared in last month's number) was first handed about, the leading artists of the city, one and all, pronounced it to be impossible that a boy so young, and uninstructed in the art, should make a drawing so very perfect. One of them, a gentleman of known candour and liberality, declared to this Editor that it was incredible,—that the boy must have copied it from some British print,—and that if he had really, as was supposed, drawn it from recollection of the original, without the benefit of a sitting, he had done what no other artist in this country, and but one, that he knew of in England, could do;—in a word, that it would be, literally, a miracle. Another declared that, taking it as a copy merely, it was an extraordinary production for a youth so young and so circumstanced. When the various specimens, which the public have now before them in the Academy, were produced in proof and incredulity was vanquished, those very gentlemen were no less liberal in their applause; and gave it as their opinion that such a genius, if properly and in time cultivated, could not fail to be an ornament to the country that gave it birth. To Master Leslie it is but justice to commemorate these particulars; and it is no less due to justice to mention that America is likely to be indebted to the liberality of Messrs. Bradford and Inskeep for this native jewel's being polished to the highest perfection, and set a brilliant ornament in her annals.

Digitized by Google

THE

MIRROR OF TASTE

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

VOLUME III.] JUNE, 1811. [NUMBER VI.

HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 274.]

EVERY attempt to injure the reputation of the CID served to increase its attractions and extend its fame; and Corneille had the triumphant satisfaction to see the cardinal derided and his creatures despised for their injurious attacks upon his work. An objection to a certain passage in the Cid occasioned as much critical controversy as the "*Put out the light*" and "THEN, *put out the light*" of our Shakspeare. The passage is "*A tu du cœur?*" The objection to which was, that as it was simply "Have you courage?" it was an unfit question to be put to a valiant champion such as Rodrigue, and indeed, were that the meaning of the sentence, would be inapplicable to the circumstance on which it is introduced. On the other hand, it was alleged, that the academy purposely altered the passage from "*a tu* un *cœur?*" which was written by Corneille, and which meant "Have you a heart—have you nature—have you filial affections—have you laudable family pride, and courage to revenge your father's wrongs by destroying the father of her you love?"

Digitized by Google

In a word, there was no mode of attack which malice could wish, or cunning could devise, that was not put in practice. Shakspeare himself never was more venomously and wantonly assailed than was the Cid, by the enemies of Corneille. It was represented as in some parts inflated, in some immoral, and in most jejune, dull, puerile and uninteresting. The great Racine himself, in this one case at least, descending from the lofty preeminence of his talents, did not disdain to share in this little dirty work of detraction; having in a play of his, called "*Les Plaideurs*," travestied, even to caricature, some beautiful passages of the Cid. This, being done by a young man of real genius, seems more than any other to have been resented by Corneille, who, on reading it, exclaimed "What! shall a youngster be allowed thus to ridicule one's best poetry?"

But all was ineffectual. The sarcasms, the criticisms, the ridicule and the invenomed satire of all the praters and writers, "fell to cureless ruin;" and his enemies had the mortification to find, that nothing could injure Corneille's fame, so strongly was it built, and so deeply was it founded in public opinion. The triumph of the CID over the cardinal and the academy was decisive; and in the plaudits of the public voice, the feeble snarling of the curs of envy, was most completely and for ever buried. Despreaux has recorded this in the following lines:

> En vain contre le CID un ministre se ligue,
> Tout Paris pour chimene, a les yeux DE RODRIGUE;
> L'Academie en corps a beau le censurer;
> Le public revolte s'obstine a l'admirer.

Though thus repulsed and defeated, the cardinal felt neither shame nor remorse; but lending the ear rather to the suggestions of his heart than to the dictates of plain sense, he still hugged the hope that Corneille would bring forth some other work which would enable the academy to crush him, or at least to lower his fame and his pride. In this, however, his eminence, and all who wished as he did, were completely disappointed: for ere yet the growl of discontent had died away, and while yet the haunts of literature reechoed with the praises of the Cid, Corneille brought out his HORACE [*Horatius*]. Immediately the academy were put in motion by the cardinal, and sat in judgment on the play with no less appetite than before to indulge their patron, and injure Corneille: but they could make nothing of it: the world saw into their baseness, despised their motives, and derided their puny attempts. The

Digitized by Google

academy, however, persevered in fulminating their censures, greatly to the advantage of Corneille: for the more rancorous and calumnious that body was, the more resolute and active were all other men to defend and do him justice. On this occasion Corneille elegantly remarked that it was but just his piece should meet the same fate as the person who was the subject of it: "Horatius," added he, "was condemned by the duumvirs, but absolved by the "people."

The fecundity of Corneille's muse, considering the very superior excellence of her productions, is perfectly marvellous: for while yet the public were loud in their applause of the *Horace*, nay, while they were hot in pursuit of it, he brought out his tragedy of CINNA, which many think the best of all his productions. In truth, any reader of taste will find it difficult to confess that there exists to this day, in the French language, any drama superior to it. The cold sentence of the closet critic on a dramatic production, though no doubt intitled to its share of consideration, vanishes when opposed to the decision of the heart and public feelings on its representation. Of the extraordinary effect of the *Cinna*, two instances are mentioned, which would be sufficient to confirm its claim to immortality; and those have been recorded only because they related to the very highest and most illustrious personages; but it is fair to conclude, that there were multitudes who were as feelingly interested, and, if they had been exposed at the time to similar circumstances, would have shown it as openly as those great personages did. One of them was Lewis the Fourteenth—the other, the great CONDE.

The chevalier De Rohan was lying under sentence of death for conspiring against the state, and Lewis had obstinately resisted every application made in his behalf,—nay, refused to listen to the solicitations of the most powerful persons, or even of those who were most important to his concerns, and most dear to his heart. The night preceding the day appointed for the chevalier's execution, the king went to the representation of CINNA, and was so forcibly struck by many of the passages, and particularly by that speech of Augustus in the fifth act, in which he so eloquently congratulates himself on having obtained a conquest over his passions, that though, from pride, or some other consideration, he refrained from voluntarily issuing an immediate revocation of the sentence, he afterwards frequently declared, that if at that moment

Digitized by Google

he had been solicited to save the life of De Rohan, he could not have refused to do it.

The other instance is that of the great Condé who, at the age of twenty years, was so deeply affected by the Cinna that he wept heartily in spite of him. This being related to Lewis, struck him as a most fortunate prognostic, and a certain presage of that prince's future good conduct and greatness.

The next year (1640) the muse of Corneille had another child named POLIEUCTE, which had like to have perished in the birth. The history of this piece is singular. Corneille sent it to the theatre to be perused and approved by the actors. Though it holds equal rank with the Cinna in the opinions of a large portion of the critical world, and by not a few is deemed superior, the actors thought it not worth performing, and refused it. It happened that one of them, who was intrusted by the rest to return it to Corneille, took it into his head to take another loose glance at it as he walked up and down his chamber; and meeting a passage in it which to his over-delicate taste was so offensive and so greatly discomposed his temper that he dashed it out of his hand, throwing it in such a direction that, by mere accident, it fell upon the tester of his bed, and he thought no more of it—or at least he did not think it worth his while to give himself any further trouble about it, and there left it. For a considerable time no one knew what had become of poor *Polieucte*, till about eighteen months after, when an upholsterer, being employed to take down the bed, found the manuscript, and thus rescued one of the most beautiful productions of the human mind from oblivion.

Corneille, being in his heart persuaded that the play was deserving of a very different fate from that which the actors assigned to it, and from which it had so miraculously escaped, resolved to press forward the representation of it; and, to that end, read the piece to a body which then constituted the most learned, ingenious, and liberal tribunal over all literary controversies existing in France, and which met at the hotel de Rambouillet. Out of regard to the feelings of a person whose exalted merit deserved the greatest respect, the members applauded the piece in the presence of Corneille; but on his departure, committed it in charge to M. de Voiture to inform Corneille, in the most delicate manner possible, that *Polieucte* was not viewed by that body with that encouraging warmth that might be expected; and that there were some passages in it, those espe-

Digitized by Google

cially which touched upon religion, that displeased them. Coming forth under such unpromising auspices, who could have imagined that this production, thus censured for its freedom with religion, was to be the play which would first open the eyes of the French public to the respectability of dramatic entertainments, CONSIDERED IN A MORAL LIGHT; and thus rejected by the actors, was to be that which, by occasioning players to be viewed with a respect and consideration they never experienced before, would induce them to deserve it by a complete amendment of their moral conduct.

Upon the discouraging representation of Voiture, the modesty of Corneille impelled him to withdraw his piece from the stage; but he was at length prevailed upon to leave it in the hands of the actors; with strict injunctions however on his part, and a promise on that of one of the performers, that it should not be acted. Whether they were privately instigated by some friend of Corneille's of superior judgment to the rest, or imagined it would be beneficial to the theatre, and, whatever he might pretend, pleasing to him, the actors fortunately violated their promise, and Polieucte was performed in public.

That night made an era in the art of acting in France.—In Polieucte there is a scene touching religion, the awfulness of which struck the principal performer with a persuasion that it demanded a solemnity in the execution not practised on the stage, and indeed that it required a total departure from the usual extravagance and frivolity of scenic representation. It is in the fourth act. SEVERUS being smitten with the conviction of the unity of God, makes known to FABIAN his doubts respecting the polytheistical tenets of the pagans. In conveying these sentiments, BELLEROSE, a celebrated actor, who performed the part of Severus, had the ingenuity and the discretion to depart from his accustomed mode of action and delivery; and instead of it assumed such an air and tone of simple solemnity, so natural a demeanor, and such good sense, that the people who, in all their lives before, had never seen any thing but almost frantic extravagance and unnatural bombast, were struck with wonder and delight, and, for the first time, found their eyes opened to the true delineation of nature on the stage. Out of respect to religion, Bellerose was averse to the introduction in any way of a subject so sacred on the mimic scene: but it being determined to act the play, he undertook the part with emotions of reverential awe, and exerted himself to make it as solemn and impressive as

Digitized by Google

possible. The play was in consequence greatly admired. The public approbation of the sentiments it contained was extended to the actors, who were from that time treated with a respect which had never before belonged to them; and were so raised in estimation that the next year the following *arret* was made in their favour.

"In case the said comedians regulate the action of their per-"formances so as to be entirely free from impurity, we will that "their exhibitions,—as by this means they will innocently amuse "the public,—be considered as void of blame and reproach; and "also, that their occupation shall not be pleaded as an impediment "to the exercise of business, or connexion in public commerce." From which arret it appears, that the members of that profession had before laboured under very severe disqualifications.

One would imagine that the composing of three such tragedies as *Horace*, *Cinna* and *Polieucte*, within two years, would have exhausted any mind, however affluent; and yet early in the next year (1641) we find Corneille producing another tragedy, *Pompee*, not at all inferior to the other three.

As it is impossible to speak of Corneille fairly, without being tempted to speak in censure of Richelieu, we will separate the subjects as soon as we can, and get rid of the cardinal with the best grace possible, by stating, that in the year 1642, in the course of which our poet brought out his best comedy, *Le Menteur*, his eminence went to another, and we hope a better, world, precisely at that crisis when the fame of the object of his hatred had reached its meridian.

The character of this extraordinary man may have its use: it may serve to mortify the pride of rank and power, and warn men against the pernicious fatuity of grasping at objects which nature and circumstances have placed out of their reach. In his instance, the pitiful ambition of excelling in poetry not only misled the cardinal's understanding, but corrupted his heart. So voracious was his appetite for fame as well as power, that while he thought nothing above his attainment, there were few things too low for his emulation; and the end being once proposed, he seemed no ways scrupulous about the means. To Richelieu the character which queen Catherine, in Shakspeare's Henry the Eighth, gives of cardinal Wolsey, is in many points applicable—

> Yet thus far, Griffith, give me leave to speak of him,
> And yet with charity;—he was a man

Digitized by Google

Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
Himself with princes; one that, by suggestion,
Tied all the kingdom: simony was fair play;
His own opinion was his law; i' the presence
He would say untruths; and be ever double
Both in his words and meaning. He was never,
But where he meant to ruin, pitiful;—
His promises were,—as he then was,—mighty;
But his performance,—as he is now,—nothing.

So omnivorous was Richelieu's vanity that, while he completely governed France, was scourging the house of Austria, and ruling the politics of Europe at will, and to that end employed himself in promoting mischief and exciting national commotions, the same exorbitant restlessness and turbulence of passion extended itself to the theatre, the academy, and every establishment in France connected with poetry and literature, and inflamed them also to intestine commotions. Though without any reasonable pretensions to emulation with Corneille, he set up as his rival, and was thrown into greater trepidation by the Cid than he would have been if the hostile military powers of Europe, and the malcontents of France, were armed at the gates of Paris. What a load of misery must this man have brought down upon himself by this perverted ambition, if it be true, as no doubt it is, what Fontenelle says, that, after the Cid, "Corneille became more elevated in Horace,—still more in "Cinna,—and still more in Polieucte,—beyond which nothing could "reach?" Yet as it is ordained that every evil shall have its concomitant good, this preposterous passion of the cardinal, while it degraded him, advanced the drama. Every writer, who had talents sufficient to flatter himself that he had more, fell to work with earnestness, if not to reach the goal of fame, at least to obtain the cardinal's patronage and good will, while those who were most eminent for talents strained every nerve in emulation of each other: the consequence of which was, that the drama and the French stage were, during his eminence's time, raised to the greatest elevation they ever attained.

As to Corneille himself, whatever mortification his feelings may have endured, his productions were no doubt benefited and his fame enhanced by the cardinal's malicious efforts to injure them. For it is the nature of all men, except the very worst, to favour those who are the innocent objects of oppression: yet no sooner was the cardinal taken off than Corneille's muse assumed a higher station;

Digitized by Google

from being indebted to favour, she now commanded, and left all rivals panting behind and "toiling after her in vain;" the four tragedies, so praised by Fontenelle, occupying the theatre almost exclusively. Though his comedy of the *Menteur* had considerable success, the public still admired his tragedies more. They sipped of the former—but they drank deep of the latter: yet, tempted by the approbation which his Thalia received, he wrote a sequel to the Menteur, borrowed, as that also was, from the exhaustless stores of Lope de Vega. This was intitled *Suite du Menteur*, and met with what other writers would consider success, and had still more when, after being laid for many years on the shelf, it was revived. But the taste of France for comedy had not yet arrived at perfection; and the applause which Corneille's comic pieces received was so much inferior to that which had been lavished on his tragedy, and to what he had been accustomed to, that he very wisely resolved to take leave of "the luring jade, Thalia," notwithstanding her bewitching smiles, and to attach himself with unshaken fidelity to her *sombre* sister: to do greater honour to whom, in his next offering, he lay by for some time, and in the year 1646, produced his tragedy of RODOGUNE, which immediately received the stamp of public approbation.

Of all his plays, Rodogune is that which Corneille himself most approved. After avowing this, he says: "This preference is perhaps in me the effect of that blind partiality which parents sometimes entertain for one child rather than another; perhaps it may be tainted with a little self-love, because this tragedy is more properly my own than any thing that has preceded it, on account of the incidents being new, original, invented, and such as never before had been exhibited in a theatre; and if this reason should be just, it establishes a fact which confirms the propriety of my partiality."

Corneille's pieces, subsequent to Rodogune, began to be received with less warmth; not that his general fame grew less, but because, for reasons which will appear, each particular piece seemed inferior to his former works. In 1646, he produced *Theodore*, a tragedy, which had very little success, considered as a work of Corneille's. In 1647, he brought out *Heraclius:* this was greatly admired by the judicious, but was not sufficiently understood by the multitude.—Why this coldness to his pieces took place it is not a little curious to contemplate.

Digitized by Google

From what has been related of Richelieu, one would think that, he being gone, Corneille would be little likely to have any thing to do with cardinals again, since, for one man, he had more than his share of them: but, as if it had been decreed by fate that he should be the sport of their eminences, he had hardly got from out of the fangs of Richelieu, when he was pounced upon by Mazarine, who, as well as Richelieu, was a cardinal and a prime minister.

It seems that when Corneille was on the point of bringing out his Cinna, he, in order to mortify Richelieu, proposed to dedicate it to Mazarine; but having reason, from indications he received on the subject, to be assured that his dedication would be churlishly received, and that no return would be made to him for that mark of respect, he changed his mind, and addressed it to Monsieur Montauron, a gentleman who had the ambition to be thought a patron and protector of poets and men of letters, and from whom he, in return, received a gift of one thousand pistoles. This splendid douceur was construed by both the cardinals into an insult, and by the world was considered as a very just and well merited satire on their eminences. This was not a circumstance well calculated to improve the interest of Corneille with either of them; so that on the death of Richelieu, and the accession to ministerial power of Mazarine, Corneille found that seat, from which one enemy had dropped, filled with another. On the other hand, Mazarine, who knew how much his predecessor was indebted for his celebrity to corrupt poets and to actors, resolved to try his luck, and by encouraging musicians, composers and singers, instead of players, to procure for himself a new sort of notoriety. From this we are to date the origin of the opera in France: and to this new taste may chiefly be ascribed the decline which took place in the long established attractiveness of Corneille's pieces.

Yet it would be wrong to dismiss these productions without inquiring into the reality of their claims. *Theodore* certainly deserved a much better reception than it met with. The public had now become tired of such pieces; and the tragedy of *Heraclius*, which followed it, was considered as a strange, eccentric production. The truth is, that the poet was, by the success of his Rodogune operating in confirmation of his own opinion, so vastly enamoured with its originality, that he determined to be still more original in Heraclius; and in his efforts to be so, he degenerated into obscu-

Digitized by Google

rity, which gave occasion to the witty abbe Pelegrin to call Heraclius *the despair of all tragic authors*, and to the arch Despreau to nickname it the *logogriphe*, or enigma. Yet was Corneille much in conceit with this play. "This tragedy," says he, "is more an effort of invention than Rodogune; and I may venture to say that "it is a happy original, of which there will be many copies." And then he makes open confession of its obscurity, explains the nature of the incidents, shows how they are connected and interwoven, and points out the difficulty and intricacy in which they are involved, and in the end says that they cannot be comprehended but by reflection after the conclusion of the piece,—and that, perhaps, they cannot be enjoyed with perfect taste till after the representation of them has been witnessed a second time.

Since perspicuity is one of the most necessary ingredients in a dramatic production, at least in representation, it is no wonder that a piece which the author of it himself describes as so very incomprehensible, should have given a handle to the enemies of Corneille to object to it and throw it into derision. Yet the unpopularity of Heraclius was not altogether the fault of Corneille, but arose from the taste of the times, which began to waver and to go over to the opera, now set on foot by the agency of Mazarine.

It was in the year 1647 that cardinal Mazarine established THE OPERA, the splendor, the scenery, machinery, decorations, mummery, dancing, music, and novelty of which rendered it at once so popular among that capricious versatile people that the valuable dramatic entertainments were totally neglected; and in the overbearing tide of abominable taste Corneille himself was borne away along with the rest. But after three years total rejection from the stage, he thought it prudent to conform to the fashion of the times, and in 1650 his *Andromede* came forth to the public, with all the stupid pomp and priggish foppery of the Italian opera.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

BIOGRAPHY.*

MEMOIRS OF MRS. MATTOCKS.

When HALLAM fills the tragic scene,
Displaying tender Juliet's mien,
The tearful glances of her eyes
Attract a hundred Romeos' sighs;
Nay, if you'll take a critic's word,
I've often wish'd "I were her bird."
But when the rosy-laughing hours
Fly swift before her comic powers,
With face and figure form'd to please,
With spirit, elegance, and ease,
I envy Juliet's bird no more,
For BELL's the goddess I adore.

Poetry of those Times.

To those who, deeming dramatic entertainments as important and beneficial to society, consider the establishment of a theatre in this country a fortunate event, nothing so nearly and dearly connected with the father of the American stage as the subject of this memoir can be uninteresting: more particularly as Mrs. Mattocks, in addition to the circumstance of her being the sister of the late Mr. Hallam, was in almost every article of her life, private as well as public, one of the most estimable as well as admirable of her profession.

This illustrious actress and excellent woman, whose maiden name was Isabella Hallam, was born in Goodman's-fields, in the year 1746. Her uncle, William Hallam, was manager of the theatre in that place, during one, or perhaps more, of the secessions of Mr. Giffard. Her father was also an actor at the same theatre at the time when Mr. Garrick was there. He is said to have been much admired in low comedy; but was, probably, impelled, by the misfortunes that attended the company after Garrick left it, to seek an asylum in America.

Dramatic performances were, at that time, a great novelty to the American people: therefore it is no wonder that, soon after his

* The continuation of Mr. WARREN's life is unavoidably postponed to the next number.

Digitized by Google

arrival, he became manager of the theatres of Charleston, New-York, and Philadelphia.* His success in these pursuits is said to have been such as to enable him to realize a fortune of 10,000*l.*, the whole of which was lost in the American war.

Miss Hallam, at the departure of her father, was left under the protection of Mrs. Barrington, her aunt, an actress of very considerable merit at Covent-garden theatre, who procured for her one of the most finished educations at that time known; of which she seems in a very conspicuous manner to have availed herself.

The first appearance of Miss Hallam upon the stage was at so very early a period of her life as the age of four years and a half, in the character of the Parish Girl, in the "*What d'ye call it*," a tragic comic poetical farce, written by Gay.† It happened that the dutchess of Bolton (the famous Polly Peachum) was present at the performance, and, charmed with the infant actress, sent her five guineas, accompanied with a polite card, expressing her approbation, and intimating a wish that the little Parish Girl of that evening might be as successful through life as she had been.‡

It has been justly said by Cibber, that there is something so fascinating to the juvenile mind in the characters of heroes and heroines, that it is little to be wondered why all the candidates for theatric fame are anxious to attract the town to the pomp and circumstance of sublime tragedy, and to seize on the tender passions of their audiences, in a part where they are most assailable, by exhibiting themselves in circumstances of exquisite distress, and, by a display of their tragic powers, giving them

* The first dramatic representation in the then colonies of America was performed in Philadelphia, by a small company from England, under the management of Mr. Douglas, father-in-law of Mr. Hallam, of the New York theatre, and of our favourite, Mrs. Mattocks. Some years before the revolutionary war, Douglas had erected a regular theatre in Philadelphia; but that event drove him to seek his fortune in the West Indian islands.—JANSEN'S STRANGER IN AMERICA.

† In ridicule of the tragedies of those times, particularly of Venice Preserved.

‡ The Parish Girl is said to have been the first part in which the celebrated Lavinia Fenton appeared at the little theatre in the Haymarket. When Miss Hallam undertook it, she is said to have been in figure so diminutive, considering the size of the stage, that a gentleman in the pit exclaimed, "I can hear the little charmer very well, but it is impossible to "see her without a magnifying glass."

Digitized by Google

a *full dose* of the *doleful*, while in situations where, as Murphy observes,

Young gentlefolks are apt to fall;

though of this, with respect to Miss Hallam, there was no danger. Prepared by an excellent education, and inspired by a true dramatic genius, she seemed, according to the opinion of the critics, born at once to attract and to fix the attention of the town. Under these happy auspices, and with this promising prospect, at the age of fifteen, she commenced tragic actress, and began, at Covent-garden, her theatrical career, in the arduous part of Juliet. We think her aunt, Mrs. Barrington, performed Lady Capulet, and, consequently, introduced the young *debutante* upon the stage.

The good nature of a metropolitan audience always secures a favourable reception to a lovely girl in so interesting a situation; but of this indulgence Miss Hallam had, in the course of the evening, little occasion to avail herself: she performed the difficult part intrusted to her in a manner that would have done credit to the most experienced actress, and, consequently, elicited concomitant applause.

The manager was too wise to suffer the genius of this young favourite to lie dormant; he, on the contrary, promoted its expansion in the various classes of the drama, tragic, comic, and operatic; though we must observe, that the two latter seem, by her having resigned the former, to have been, of late years, considered by herself as peculiarly her *forte*. Perhaps the observation which Dr. Johnson makes with respect to Shakspeare, as a writer, will, in some degree, apply to Mrs. Mattocks as an actress:—"Her tra-"gedy, excellent as it was, seemed to be ART; her comedy to be "NATURE."

In the *operas*, she was, as an actress, so much superior to Miss Brent, that we have always entertained an idea that she was a much better singer, at least when she followed her in the same parts—Polly, in the Beggar's Opera; Rosetta, in Love in a Village; Patty, in the Maid of the Mill, &c.: for instance, she was a hundred times more fascinating, as the feelings of the audience, except that part of it termed *connoisseurs*, who seldom have any feelings at all, fully evinced.

At different periods, Miss Hallam performed in Artaxerxes the three important characters, Artaxerxes, Mandane, and Arbaces.

Digitized by Google

In the part of Polly, she was so truly excellent, that Mr. Rich observed, Gay might burst the cerement of his sepulchre to hear her.

Her performance of Bertha, in The Royal Merchant; or, The Beggar's Bush, was distinguished by a circumstance which showed her taste and judgment. The scene of this piece is in Flanders: Bertha appears as the niece to Vandunk, the governor of Bruges, a character which she dressed exactly in the style of Reuben's wife (Helena Forman), as she appears in a celebrated picture by that artist.

The Flemish female costume, though common in England during the reigns of the Stuarts, was, at this period, entirely unknown on the English stage; therefore the effect of the revival of the Vandyke dress, as it is termed, by the ladies, who have since adopted it, may be better conceived than it can be described.

In the part of Diana, the Florentine maiden, in the comedy of All's Well that Ends Well, we recollect that the simplicity yet peculiar smartness of the dress of Miss Hallam was loudly applauded on her first entrance; while the excellence of her acting contributed to keep the audience in good humour during the exhibition of a piece which was performed under very trying circumstances, it being the first after the opening of the theatre, which had been shut several days, in order to repair the devastation occasioned by the almost insane outrages of a set of *well dressed savages*, in February, 1763.

In the season of 1764, was produced a very singular species of entertainment, intended to ridicule the operatic taste then too prevalent: this was the *English* burletta of Midas,* in which Miss Hallam performed the part of Nysa, and, by her exquisite humour, greatly contributed to exalt the piece to that height of celebrity which it afterwards so justly attained. Counsellor C——, a gentleman whose genius, erudition, and talents, as a lawyer, would have borne him to the very *acme* of his profession, had not his unfortunate speculations in the *new* buildings, Dean's-yard, Westminster, depressed his spirits and paralysed his exertions, was so charmed

* This was played as a first piece, it being then in three acts: it was afterwards reduced to two, and derived, in our opinions, much advantage from compression.

Digitized by Google

with the performance of Miss Hallam, that he always called her "his little Nysa."*

We now resume our memoir, from the regular thread of which we have a little digressed, and open this part of it with a dramatic piece, intitled, "*The Trip to Scotland*," which, in the year 1765,

* His son, it appears, followed his example; for when he was a boy at Westminster school, as Mrs. Mattocks, from the intimacy that prevailed in their families, knew that the young gentlemen were much in the habit of making feasts after they had retired to their rooms for the night, she sent to Master C. a large Norfolk turkey, and an enormous chain of sausages, as a *petit soupè*, or nocturnal *bonne bouche;* in consequence of which she, the next day, received from him the following verses, of the merit of which, considering the age of the poet, we think so highly that we gladly avail ourselves of the present opportunity to insert them.

VERSES,

Written by S—— C——, Esq. when he was a youth of fourteen years of age, in return for a Norfolk turkey and sausages, sent by Mrs. Mattocks to him when at Westminster School.

The goddesses oncé, as the old poets tells us,
Took delight in intriguing with us pretty fellows.
To make matters easy, Jove always conferr'd
On each, as a courier, her favourite bird.
When the peacock was seen, with his plumage erected,
A message from Juno was surely expected.
When Venus would write to her lover Anchises,
By the dove she despatch'd her celestial advices.
Nay, Pallas (though reckon'd too sober for flirting)
Was sure of a nodding grave owl at her curtain;
'Twas whisper'd, however, that *she* had her spark,
Else why should her messenger fly in the dark?
Be it known, that of late an intrigue is begun
Betwixt me and dear Nysa, the goddess of fun;
And Nysa, lest mortals should think her absurd,
Has follow'd the fashion, and sent me her bird.
'Tis true that she sent nor owl, peacock, nor dove,
But her turkey has taught me the language of love.
The messenger came, and my fancy did hit,
Not sparkling with plumage, but truss'd for the spit:
On each side did the gizzard and liver appear,
And a link of fine sausages brought up the rear.
O follow, dear goddess! this excellent rule,
(I learn'd it from Horace this morning at school)
That love, without eating and drinking, grows cool.
So whene'er at a school-boy you level your dart,
The way through the stomach's the way to the heart.

Digitized by Google

was performed by Mr. George Mattocks and Miss Hallam, both of the theatre royal, Covent-garden, for *their own* benefit. The wags, upon this occasion, said, that *Apollo* had shown his taste in running away with *Nysa*, instead of pursuing *Daphne*.

Mr. Mattocks, with a very handsome person, possessed also an excellent voice; he played the principal characters in all the English operas, which formed a species of dramatic amusement that had a prodigious run in those times: he was, therefore, deservedly a favourite of the public.

This young couple, the year after their marriage, were engaged at the Liverpool theatre, which was then under the management of Mr. Gibson, an actor whom, in many of his characters, Gloster, in King Lear, for instance, we thought excellent; though he was said to retain more the manner of the OLD SCHOOL than any one at that time on the stage. But it was not merely on the stage that he displayed his excellence: his integrity in private life was firmly established; his benevolence, in proportion to his means, was extensive; consequently he was extremely loved and esteemed.

Mrs. Mattocks, at this time not more than one-and-twenty, was most admirably calculated to become the favourite of a town at once *commercial* and *critical*. Animated, elegant, and fascinating, her histrionic and vocal powers were soon drawn forth in tragedy, comedy, opera, and farce. She acted better than any one that had ever been seen there. She sung enchantingly, and, consequently, her success was unbounded.

The metropolitan fashions had not, at this period, taken such rapid strides from the center to the extremities of the island, as they have been used to do in more modern times; therefore the various dresses of Mrs. Mattocks, after they had passed the *ordeal* of the female critics in the theatre, and been there displayed to the admiration of every one, were frequently sent for by the principal ladies of Liverpool, for paraphernalian patterns; and so much was she the object of attraction that, in her evening walks, she was surrounded with admirers; so it may easily be believed that the fame of this London phenomenon soon expanded, till it reached Manchester, where she was solicited to sing once a week at the concert, which was performed every Thursday evening.

For these vocal exertions her agreement was ten guineas per night and a clear benefit. This sum was, by the lower order of the people at Manchester, thought so enormous, *at that time*, for

Digitized by Google

merely singing a few songs, that the market-place, which faced the inn where she resided, used to be crowded with spectators, who waited to gape and stare at " th' woman that did get ten guineas a " noight for zinging of zongs."

Mr. Gibson died at Liverpool, about the year 1771, very generally lamented. He left his property, in which was included a patent for the theatre, to a lady of the name of Bennet, whom we remember at Covent-garden theatre an actress of some eminence, in the characters of antiquated abigails and modern chambermaids, Patch, Foible, Inis, also Lady Loverule, &c., where she was a kind of co-rival to Mrs. Pitt.

A new theatre had, before the death of Mr. Gibson, been built at Liverpool, of which it appeared that many speculators wished to purchase the lease and patent, and, in consequence, made various applications to Mrs. Bennet for this purpose; but to these she with great propriety replied, " That all Mr. Gibson had possessed had " been derived from the inhabitants of Liverpool; that to them she " felt the highest sense of obligation for the ease and comfort which " attended her declining years; therefore, she would never part with " the patent to any one that would not promise to engage Mrs. " Mattocks to perform, as she knew that it would be an article " in the agreement more acceptable to the town than any other " which she had the power to stipulate."

In consequence of this determination of Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Mattocks and Mr. Younger purchased the patent betwixt them.

This accession of her husband, to the joint management of the theatre, gave to Mrs. Mattocks her choice and full range of parts: her situation, it is probable, produced a still greater expansion of her genius, for we know that her success was unbounded. But it was not only on the stage that she shone with unrivalled lustre; her strong understanding, her talents, and the elegance of her manners, endeared her to a large circle of polished society, by whom she was equally loved and esteemed.

Under these happy auspices, it is natural to imagine that the doors of Fortune's temple were thrown open to her, and that, secure from future storms, she had only to enter, and enjoy the happiness which seemed to court her acceptance. Yet how soon was the cup of prosperity dashed from her lips! The patent, which she had fondly, and indeed rationally, hoped would have been the

Digitized by Google

foundation of her highest prosperity, proved the source of her deepest adversity. She does not know the reason of this.* We do! at least we will endeavour to launch a conjecture which, we think, will come near the truth, viz. that Mr. Mattocks was a much better actor than a manager, as we have understood that in the latter character he suffered his good nature to be imposed on, and his credulity to be turned to the advantage of those who understood that part of business better than himself. It was impossible that the inhabitants of the town of Liverpool, liberal in their ideas and critical in their judgment, could have taken any dislike to the company enumerated in the note; therefore it is fair to suppose, that their disgust to the theatre arose from a source with which neither her husband nor herself were acquainted. Be this as it may, the ill consequences fixed upon them. In the wreck of the theatre they lost all, even to the tea-spoon and the towel.

Mr. Mattocks was, of course, declared a bankrupt; and the severest trial of his life is said to have been that awful moment, when he was compelled to take from his beloved wife her watch and diamonds, which he laid on the table before the commissioners, who unanimously insisted upon his immediately returning them to his pocket, and, in every other instance, treated him with that humanity and good breeding which are concomitant to the English mercantile character.

Through the whole of this distressful scene, Mrs. Mattocks supported herself with the greatest fortitude; but, as it too frequently happens, where the spirits are highly strained to meet the exigency of circumstances, as soon as her fears for the personal safety of her husband had subsided, a reverse took place which sunk them to despondency.

It has been said, that when Mrs. Mattocks had discharged all the

* We make this assertion, because, writing to a friend, she says,—"What "I fondly hoped would have been the foundation of my fortune has proved "its ruin: why or wherefore, I cannot tell, but the public was dissatisfied "with the company that was brought down; though I think you will wonder "at it when I tell you that, at the same time, they have had Wroughton, "Quick, Lee Lewis, Henderson, Mrs. Crouch, Mrs. S. Kemble, myself, "Mr. Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons,(§) and many more, that were deserving of "commendation, have acted for a whole season together."

(§) Perhaps such a company as this was never before seen out of the metropolis, and, indeed, very seldom within it.

Digitized by Google

expenses attendant upon their distressed situation, they were left with only one *half crown* in the world. Let us see how our heroine behaved in these trying circumstances. She showed the half-crown to her husband, kissed it, and said, "My dear George, we are still "rich, for this is *our own*, and no one can take it from us!"

This was, indeed, rising superior to the affliction of the moment; but, alas! it was her last effort; for she went immediately to the rehearsal of the Midnight Hour,* and, while she stood on the stage, sickened of a putrid fever, attended with symptoms of the utmost danger, which the physician pronounced to have been engendered solely by the misery and agitation of mind that she had so long endured: though we are happy to add that, through his care and attention, an amiable woman was restored to her friends and to the public.

Mr. Aickin had, by this time, succeeded to the management of the theatre at Liverpool, and he appointed Mr. Mattocks to conduct the concern; Mrs. Mattocks, of course, resumed her situation on that stage; but when the former left that town, and engaged in the management of the Edinburgh theatre, Mr. Mattocks went as his representative, and Mrs. Mattocks, we think, returned to London, where, while she was anxiously expecting his arrival, she received the most afflictive news that he was snatched from her for ever.

He died at Edinburgh, where he had been extremely loved and esteemed, as the manner in which his funeral was attended by many of the most respectable inhabitants, fully evinced, and where his memory was revered by every one.

Having thus, with very little deviation, pursued the thread of our memoir to the widowhood of the subject of it, we shall close this sketch with the notice of a few circumstances and desultory observations, which would otherwise have broken too much the chain of our narration.

Mr. and Mrs. Mattocks, in consequence of some disagreement with Mr. Harris, left Covent-garden; but upon the impending ruin that threatened to involve their affairs, she had the good sense to make an application to be reinstated in a situation to which it has appeared that she has had through life the strongest attachment. Her offer was liberally received, and her consequent appearance on the stage most loudly applauded.

* Then about to be performed for the first time.

Digitized by Google

To add much to what we have already said of the dramatic powers of an actress so universal in her cast of parts and so successful in all of them as Mrs. Mattocks, would here be nugatory; perhaps the highest praise that can, in this respect, be conferred upon her is concentred in the single circumstance of her having been much admired, and particularly protected, by such an exquisite judge of theatrical talents as the late Mr. Garrick, to whose friendly instructions, in her juvenile years, she has always been ready to attribute much of her professional proficiency.

When Murphy's comedy of "Know Your Own Mind"* was in rehearsal at Covent-garden theatre, in which Mrs. Mattocks played Lady Bell, with a vivacity that, in more instances than one, most seasonably interposed to save the piece, Mr. Garrick wrote the epilogue, which was spoken by her with even more than her usual excellence. As there is something in this production which shows how well the author understood, and how justly he discriminated, the comic powers of Mrs. Mattocks, we shall, therefore, quote its first lines:

If after tragedy 'tis made a rule
To laugh no more, I'll be no titt'ring fool,
To jog you with a joke in tragic doze,
And shake the dew-drops from the weeping rose.†
Prudes of each sex affirm, and who denies?
That in each tear a whimpering Cupid lies.
To such wise formal folk my answer's simple;
A thousand Cupids revel in a dimple;
From these soft nests with laughter out they rush,
Perch'd on your heads, like small birds in a bush.
Beauty resistless in each smile appears:
Are you for dimples, ladies, or for tears?
Dare they in comedy our mirth abridge?
Let us stand up for giggling privilege;
Assert our rights that laughter is no sin,
From the screw'd simper to the broad-fac'd grin!‡

It is a curious circumstance that Murphy, though then a veteran author, was observed, on the first night of this play, walking back-

* Performed, for the first time, in the year 1777.

† Ne'er does the gentle rose revive so soon,
But, bath'd in *nature's tears*, it droops till noon.
Sheridan's Epilogue to Semiramis.

‡ This epilogue was written purposely for Mrs. Mattocks; and the applause she received in it stamped her character in this line of speaking.

Digitized by Google

ward and forward, on the *opposite prompt*, with his hands behind him, in deep meditation. The applause, that occasionally cheered his production, did not in the least seem to attract his attention. Absorbed in thought, he still continued his pacing up and down, probably to the amusement of some of the performers, while they waited for their *cues*. After Mrs. Mattocks had spoken the epilogue, and while she was receiving the congratulations of the company, he came up to her "with measured steps and slow," exhibiting more the appearance of a corpse than of a living creature, and seizing both her hands pressed them between his, exclaiming at the same time, "Heaven bless you! heaven bless you! to you I owe much of "the success which has attended this evening's performance."

He then turned to Mr. Harris, and with a sensibility, frequently the concomitant of genius, described the agitation of his mind, of which his disordered frame and tremulous accents were indeed sufficient evidences.

We can remember being particularly struck with the excellent performance of Mrs. Mattocks in Lady Racket; but we think in the arduous part of Lady Restless, who, it has been observed, is much more correctly a jealous wife than Mrs. Oakley, she so strongly depicted that passion, she was so far beyond every other performer, and so truly what the author intended, that we must deem it not only her best character, but the most finished piece of acting that has perhaps ever been seen.*

It has been the peculiar happiness of the life of Mrs. Mattocks, that she has repeatedly been distinguished by the royal patronage: favours of this nature are the most grateful that mortals can receive; they excite all the sensibility of the human bosom, and expand into gratitude far, far indeed, beyond the limited power of expression.

* Of the same opinion were the diurnal critics with respect to Mrs. Mattocks. We can remember it was said, "Her Lady Restless was a most "admirable piece of acting; never was the passion of jealousy more strongly "depicted or more admirably supported; upon her every appearance, the "scene was animated, and the audience enchanted."

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS OF JAMES QUIN.

[Continued from page 290.]

In the season of 1735-6, Mr. Quin first performed Falstaff, in the second part of Henry IV., for his own benefit: in 1736-7 he performed Comus, and had the first opportunity of promoting the interest of his friend Thomson, in the tragedy of Agamemnon. The following anecdote, illustrative of his sincere friendship for Thomson, cannot be here omitted. Hearing that this gentleman was confined in a spunging-house, for a debt of about seventy pounds, he repaired to the place, and having inquired for him, was introduced to the bard.

Thomson was a good deal disconcerted at seeing Quin, as he had always taken great pains to conceal his embarrassed state; and the more so, as Quin told him he was come to sup with him; being conscious that all the money he was possessed of would scarcely procure a good one, and that there was no credit in these houses. His anxiety upon this head was, however, removed, upon Quin's informing him, that as he supposed it would have been inconvenient to have had the supper dressed at the place they were in, he had ordered it from an adjacent tavern; and, as a prelude, half a dozen of claret was introduced. Supper being over, and the bottle circulating pretty briskly, Quin said, "It is now time we should "balance accounts." This astonished Thomson, who imagined he had some demand on him; and Quin perceiving it, continued:— "Mr. Thomson, the pleasure I have had in perusing your works, "I cannot estimate at less than a hundred pounds, and I insist "upon now acquitting the debt." On saying this, he put down a note of that value, and took his leave without waiting for a reply.

The season of 1738-9, produced only one new play, in which Mr. Quin performed, and that was Mustapha, by Mallet, which was said to glance both at the king and sir Robert Walpole, in the characters of Solyman the Magnificent, and Rustan his vizier. On the first night of its exhibition, all the chiefs in opposition to the country were assembled, and many speeches were applied, by the audience, to the supposed grievances of the times, and to persons and characters. The play was, in general, well acted; more particularly the parts of Solyman and Mustapha, by Quin and Millwood.

In March 1739, Mr. Quin was engaged in another dispute with one of his brethren, Mr. Theophilus Cibber, who at that period,

Digitized by Google

owing to some disgraceful circumstances relative to his conduct to his wife, was not held in the most respectable light. Quin's sarcasm on him is too gross to be here inserted. A duel was fought in the Piazza, Covent-garden, between these two actors; Quin having pulled Cibber out of the Bedford coffee-house, to answer for some words he had used in a letter to Mr. Fleetwood, relative to his refusing a part in King Lear for Mr. Quin's benefit. Cibber was slightly wounded in the arm, and Mr. Quin wounded in his fingers. After each had their wounds dressed, they came into the Bedford coffee-house and abused each other, but the company prevented farther mischief.

In the season of 1739-40, there was acted at Drury-lane theatre, on the 12th of November, a tragedy, intitled The Fatal Retirement, by a Mr. Anthony Brown, which received its sentence of condemnation on the first night. In this play Mr. Quin had been solicited to perform, which he refused; and the ill success which attended the piece, irritated the author and his friends so much, that they ascribed its failure to the absence of Mr. Quin, and, in consequence of it, insulted him for several nights afterwards, when he appeared on the stage. This treatment at length Mr. Quin resented, and determined to repel. Coming forward, therefore, he addressed the audience, and informed them, " that at the request of the author, " he had read his piece before it was acted, and given him his very " sincere opinion of it; that it was the very worst play he had ever " read in his life, and for that reason had refused to act in it." This spirited explanation was received with great applause; and, for the future, entirely silenced the opposition to him. In this season he performed in Lillo's Elmerick.

On the first of August, 1740, an entertainment of a peculiar kind was given by Frederick prince of Wales, father of his present majesty, in the gardens of Cliefden, in commemoration of the accession of king George I., and in honour of the birth of the princess Augusta, afterwards dutchess of Brunswick. It consisted of the Masque of Alfred, by Thomson and Mallet; the masque of the Judgment of Paris, and some scenes from Rich's pantomimes, by him and La Lanze; with dancing by Signora Barbarini, then lately arrived from Paris. The whole was exhibited upon a theatre in the garden, composed of vegetables, and decorated with festoons of flowers; at the end of which was erected a pavilion for the prince and princess of Wales, prince George, and princess Augusta. The per-

Digitized by Google

formers in Alfred were Quin, who represented the Hermit; Milward, Mills, Solway, Mrs. Clive, and Horton.

The next season, that of 1740-1, concluded Mr. Quin's engagement at Drury-lane. The irregular conduct of the manager, Mr. Fleetwood, induced Quin to relinquish his situation.

In the summer of 1741, Mr. Quin, Mrs. Clive, Mr. Ryan, and Mademoiselle Chateauneuf, then esteemed the best female dancer in Europe, made an excursion to Dublin. Mr. Quin had been there before, in the month of June 1739, accompanied by Mr. Giffard, and received at his benefit 136*l.*, at that time esteemed a great sum. On his second visit, he opened in his favourite part of Cato, to as crowded an audience as the theatre could contain. Mrs. Clive next appeared in Lappet, in the Miser; and Mr. Ryan came forward in Iago, to Mr. Quin's Othello. With such excellent performers, we may naturally suppose the plays were admirably sustained. Here Quin played Lord Townley, in the Provoked Husband; Manley, Mr. Ryan; and Lady Townley, Mrs. Clive: he also played King Lear; Cordelia, Mrs. Clive; and Comus, Euphrosyne Mrs. Clive. Mr. Quin, it seems, attended the Dublin company to Cork and Limerick, and the next season performed in Dublin, where he acted the part of Justice Balance, in the Recruiting Officer, at the opening of the theatre in October, on a government night. He afterwards performed a variety of characters of the first cast in the drama, with great applause, and to well-attended houses.

The state of the Irish stage was then so low, that it was often found that the whole receipt of the house was not more than sufficient to discharge Mr. Quin's engagement; and so attentive was he to his interest, and so rigid in demanding its execution, that he refused to let the curtain be drawn up until the money was regularly brought to him.

He left Dublin in February 1741-2; and on his arrival in London, he found the attention of the theatrical world entirely occupied by the merits of Mr. Garrick, who, in October preceding, had begun his theatrical career; and was then performing with prodigious success at Goodman's-fields. The fame of the new performer afforded no pleasure to Quin, who sarcastically observed, that Garrick was a new religion, and that Whitfield was followed for a time; but they would all come to church again.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

MISCELLANY.

FOR THE MIRROR OF TASTE.

If, in speaking of the following admirable verses, we were to say of them half what we think, we should indulge ourselves at the expense of the author's feelings. To him, but to him alone, it would appear flattery; and we respect him too sincerely, and set too high a value on his good opinion, to hazard a word which his modesty could interpret into the most distant suggestion of complimentary adulation. Nor is it necessary, since every thing we are capable of uttering on the merit of the lines, will be at once conceived by our readers, when we state that they come from the pen of William Moore Smith, Esq.

ODE TO SORROW,

Occasioned by the death of Miss Juliana Riché, Mrs. Mary Swift, and Mrs. Grace Coxe, three daughters of Th. Riché, Esq., of Windsor, Bucks county,—addressed to Miss Sally Riché.

Oh thou! whose venom'd arrows tear
The human breast with pangs severe,
To peace, to bliss, the constant foe;
Sorrow! to thee my weeping muse
Once more the leaves of cypress strews,
And bids the mournful verse to flow!

But ah! why steep for me thy dart,
Why pierce again this throbbing heart,
Sad mistress of the tear-worn eye?
Oft with thy wound my soul has bled,
Oft, at thy shrine, my griefs were shed,
While pensive echo learnt to sigh.

Witness bright Anna's sacred tomb!
Bear witness too, the willow'd gloom
Where Schuylkill rolls his waves along!
Constant as evening dimm'd the plain,
Responsive to the night bird's strain
To thee, I've pour'd my plaintive song.

Digitized by Google

And now, in Windsor's dreary grove,
The former seat of beauty, love,
  Dost thou erect thy ebon throne;
Each flow'ret blasted, droops its head,
The pride of all its fields is dead,
  And every smile of transport's flown!

There, bending o'er her Julia's urn,
Behold the hapless mother mourn,
  A weeping train around her wait;
In vain the hoary father tries
With fondest care to soothe her sighs
  And mitigate the blow of fate.

For ah! to Julia's sainted shade
Is sorrow's tribute scarcely paid,
  Scarce dry the drops which dew'd her urn;
When, in the pride of all her charms,
From a fond husband's clasping arms
  Behold the lov'd Maria—torn!

Yet keen suspense arrests the tear
Which starts to meet Maria's bier,
  And points to scenes of deeper gloom;
O'er hapless Grace's fainting head
Disease her baleful wing has spread,
  And leads the suff'rer to the tomb.

Oh!—not prophetic be the muse,
Whose boding eye with fear pursues
  Yon horror-shedding phantom's way!—
Scar'd at his step, pale Hope expires,
Hygeia's blasted form retires
  Beneath his stern resistless sway.

'Tis Death!—what monsters round him wait,
Supporters of their monarch's state;—
  High waves his lurid arm in air.
Avert, oh Heav'n!—the fatal blow,
This scene of complicated wo,
  Of anguish, agony, despair.

Digitized by Google

'Tis past;—the fatal dart is sped,
The meek-ey'd victim bows her head,
Submissive to the dread behest:—
The cares, the toils of life are o'er,
And pain and sorrow now no more
Can rack the lovely seraph's breast.

She sleeps in peace; but oh! what balm,
What healing, heavenly art, can calm
The storms that rend each kindred soul?
Long, long must mem'ry prompt the sigh,
The tear long dim affection's eye,
As in review her virtues roll.

Yet, mid this scene of heighten'd grief,
The muse would try to bring relief,
And blunt the soul-corroding dart;
Her voice, soft whisp'ring on the gale,
Might o'er the sharpest pangs prevail,
And consolation's balm impart.

In mild religion's form array'd,
Come then, blest muse, to Sorrow's aid;
Meek Resignation too, be there:
Oh! bring the sadly pleasing strain
Which steals the soul from thoughts of pain,
And dries Affliction's trembling tear.

Unfading wreaths thy hand shall twine
Around the consecrated shrine
Where rests each sainted slumberer's clay!
Nor thou, fond mourner, deem too rude
The bard whose steps have dar'd intrude
Where you and Sorrow love to stray.

For oft in Windsor's tuneful bowers
'Twas his to spend the social hours,
When beauty rais'd the song of joy;—
And now affliction clouds the grove,
And mute is music, dead is love,
Should he the scene ungrateful fly;—

Digitized by Google

Well might you tax his faithless heart,
Which bore in all your joys a part,
And yet refus'd in grief to join!—
Oh still,—when anguish heaves the sigh,
When beams the tear in friendship's eye,
To share those sighs, those tears, be mine.

ANOTHER, BY THE SAME HAND.

On the Death of Mrs. ——

O'er a lov'd sister's timeless urn
Not long the fair Maria sigh'd.
I go where mortals cease to mourn—
She said—she smil'd and died.

CHARACTER OF RICHARD III.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MIRROR OF TASTE.

SIR,

WHETHER Richard the Third was as bad a man as he is represented by Shakspeare, or whether he or Henry the Seventh was the perpetrator of the crimes laid to his charge, is of little consequence to the world. Yet as a curious subject of speculation, and a liberal exercise for the mind, it is a question worthy of light discussion, and deserving a place in your miscellany. Perhaps it is not the worse either for being entirely unsusceptible of a conclusive decision. In meeting such points, however unimportant they may really be, the advocates on either side ought to be as much in earnest as possible. Now, sir, I love Shakspeare so much that I wish to establish the character of Richard for ever in the shape in which he has given it. In answer, therefore, to the vindication of the crookback, contained in your number for March, I beg leave to offer the following observations, to which, if you be in reality as impartial as common fame represents you to be, you will afford a place in your next number: they are given without enthusiasm or warmth, and are the result of the cool and deliberate reflections of a very disinterested man.

Richard, born in times of peculiar turbulence, seemed nurtured in ambition; an ambition which knew no restraints, for it violated the most solemn promises and protestations, and the most sacred oaths. Richard Plantagenet, duke of York, his father, who was the

Digitized by Google

undoubted heir to the crown by descent, prosecuted his right by every crime, that could disgrace talents, evidently great.

By his fall the claim came to his gallant son, Edward IV., who, when dethroned, regained his crown by perjury. To this brother, Richard, when duke of Gloucester, was alike faithful in the cabinet and in the field. In both he conspicuously shone. George, duke of Clarence, the second brother, weak and avaricious, was seldom quiet, often turbulent, and had even been a traitor to the white rose. Clarence and Gloucester, husbands of two sisters, often quarrelled about the rich possessions of the great earl of Warwick, "the king maker," these ladies' father. Richard, taking advantage of the culpable conduct of Clarence, obtained his commitment, his trial, his condemnation, and certainly did not attempt even to stay execution.

What were the designs of Richard after this, and when he saw his elder brother, and his sovereign, sinking with a dropsy, the effect of his intemperance, does not appear from any thing which has reached us.

The death of Edward IV. determined him to, at least, be the governor of the kingdom, and guardian of his young sovereign and nephew. Crimes beget crimes; and ambition, when it has gained one object, seeks another. By the destruction of the beautiful, but weak dowager's faction, he found little opposition, and having obtained the person of the young king and his brother Richard, duke of York, he determined to seize the throne. The duke of Buckingham, the first peer in the realm, if he did not suggest Richard's usurpation, undoubtedly was his chief support in it. A measure soon fatal to himself.

Richard possessed great abilities: he was in the vigor of his age; he had seen much of business; he was artful, dexterous, and insinuating in laying his plans, and bold, daring, and decisive in executing them. Mercy was little understood by any party that succeeded to the sovereign power in the fifteenth century. Richard, far from sparing, seemed prompt to destroy, but never merely, I believe, without supposing it necessary to promote his own aggrandizement, or to secure it. He was far from the unshapen monster, which poets have feigned. Though not exactly of due symmetry in his person, his features were regular. He lost, however, greatly in the comparison when seen with his brother Edward IV., confessedly the handsomest prince of his age; he had not the

Digitized by Google

elegance of manners of that voluptuous monarch; and though equally brave, and of little less military knowledge, yet he never could inspire an army with such enraptured attachment as his brother did. Richard was a general, Edward an hero. To supply the deficiencies in his character, Richard affected, what most usurpers do, magnificence. His court and tent were more costly than the nation had ever seen. His coronation at Westminster eclipsed all others; that at York, which followed, was as brilliant as the north of England could make it. If we view his laws, they do honour to his understanding. They were best adapted for the good of the subject, as far as related to what was to be transacted between citizen and citizen: the laws were rather specious than solid, for the king knew no law but his will, and the great who were in his favour copied his example.

At first all bent to his mandates; soon disaffection showed itself, and proscriptions followed; these, added to the tragedies acted before his coronation, united a very great body of Yorkists with the Lancastrians. The violent deaths of the sons of Edward IV. gave a finishing blow to Richard's security, though he thought he was establishing his authority by destroying them.

When he raised forces to oppose the handful of meagre sick troops Henry earl of Richmond brought over, he could not have failed being the conqueror, if every one of his pretended friends had not been desirous of his death: all, except his ministers, were secretly engaged to desert him, and he died less pitied than any other sovereign who fell so gallantly in supporting himself and his cause.

I have read, with all the attention possible, lord Orford's "Historic Doubts," and the answers of his lordship's opponents.

That Richard the Third was assisting in the murder of Edward, prince of Wales, son of Henry VI., I think very probable. This nefarious act was not a deliberate crime: it was perpetrated in the fury of passion. Edward IV., enraged at the spirited but ill-timed answer of the prince, instantly struck him with his gauntlet. This was, as it were, a signal for the great personages present to attack the youth: the two royal dukes, and the two noblemen, stabbed him with their daggers or swords, and then thrust him out of the apartment; their attendants, to show their zeal, completed the horrid deed. Edward IV. was most to blame. Had he not struck the prince, or had he commanded the four others to desist from

Digitized by Google

farther violence, when he had given the blow, Edward would have been saved.

The death of Henry VI. was premeditated. It was performed with the consent, and perhaps at the desire of a victorious army, as it were in honour of their conquest at Tewkesbury, and to assure them that they were freed from all future danger from the Lancastrians. The murder was accompanied with the most indecent festivities. Whether Richard superintended the execution, or killed with his own hand the royal captive, cannot be known. From the ferocity and sanguinary character of Edward IV., it is not improbable that he persuaded the army to demand it, or acquiesced in their desire, as a matter of prudent precaution, and might commission Richard to see it done.

That the death of Clarence was brought about by the intrigues of Richard there can be no doubt. When Edward IV. lamented that no one would plead for Clarence, it should have taught him no longer to confide in Gloucester; but, on the contrary, it should have instigated him to have fenced his family so that they could not have been injured by so unnatural a character.

That Richard murdered his nephews, Edward V., and Richard, duke of York, I see no reason to doubt. That the manner of their deaths was not exactly known at the time appears evident, yet it was generally believed to have been by suffocation in their beds in the tower, and that their bodies were buried there under the stairs. In Charles the Second's reign, the bones of two youths were found under a staircase in the tower. There may have been other murders committed in the tower, besides theirs and that of Henry VI.; yet probably the remains of none were secretly buried there, but those of these two unhappy youths. All other state prisoners in the tower have been buried openly. No other human bones have been ever discovered in the tower that we know of. This weighs greatly with me. Besides, there have never been missed two young persons imprisoned there but them. That the youths, whose bones were thus discovered, had been murdered is self-evident: for, if they had died natural deaths, they would have been buried in consecrated ground. That the bodies had not been buried any very great length of time we may suppose, because a staircase, if a wooden one, as I suppose this was, seldom lasts more than two or three centuries, though then made of oak and very massy. Is it not wonderful that not one of the disputants, on this subject, should quote Speed, whose au-

Digitized by Google

thority is so directly adverse to lord Orford? Take his exact words: "I have heard," says this writer, in his Chronicle, "by credible report, of such as were secret with his [Richard's] chamberlaine, that after this abominable deed done, [the murder of his nephews] he never had quiet in his mind; he never thought himself sure; but where he went his eies ever whirled about; his body privily fenced; his hand ever on his dagger; his countenance and manner like one alwaies readie to strike againe; he took il rest a nights, lay long waking and musing, sore wearied with care and watch, rather slumbered than slept, troubled with fearful dreames, soddenly sometimes start up, and leapt out of his bed, and ranne about the chamber, so was his restlesse heart continually tossed and tumbled with the tedious impression and stormy remembrance of his abominable deed."

If we view Richard in all points, we shall see him extremely wicked. His atrocities, after the death of Edward IV., are such as appal. They exceed the sanguinary acts which were committed in the height of the civil wars. There was not even a semblance of trial; and yet there had been no battle fought, no hostile act. This did not prevent many openly revolting from him when he became king, and many others secretly favouring the earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII.

That he was extremely ungrateful to Edward IV., the best, the kindest of brothers, is self-evident in his conduct towards that monarch's sons. That he was inflexible and unforgiving to his other brother, Clarence, has also been seen. Nor was he much kinder to Clarence's children than to Edward's. If we view him as a son, he will appear in the highest degree culpable. He, like Orleans, sullied, as far as he could, the reputation of his mother. Richard made his lewd, when giving life to his elder brethren!! Orleans, when conferring existence even on himself!!! princesses whose fames were as spotless as their sons, Richard and Philip, were polluted. As a husband, Richard was cold and reserved; one who watched, with the utmost impatience, the sickness which was hastening his wife to her end, without his assistance, that he might incestuously unite himself to the real heir of the throne, Elizabeth, eldest daughter of his brother, Edward IV.,—the *real heir* by the murder of her brothers, by the cruel command of him the uncle, who now sought her hand. If Richard had any of nature's softer feelings, it was the paternal ones. He appears not only to have tenderly loved

Digitized by Google

Edward prince of Wales, his only child by his queen, but even to have been solicitous for the welfare of his illegitimate issue.

Let me add, that lord Orford began to "doubt" Richard's virtues, and in the posthumous "Historic" ones of this king, his lordship seems to think that those wicked actions, he most disbelieved, might have been performed by him. This nobleman had caprices; one was his enmity to *sovereigns* and their ministers. Of all potentates, he most hated the character of Henry VII., and wished to wipe away the stains of Richard III., merely to lower Henry's reputation, who, he would insinuate, was greatly his inferior.

JOHANNA BAPTISTA VERUE,

Daughter of the duke de Luynes, and a much beloved wife of the count de Verue, a woman of extraordinary beauty, intellect and accomplishment, but an unfaithful wife; to this defect in duty, her husband undesignedly contributed. Not content with possessing such excellence, joined to a love of retirement and domestic life, the thoughtless and imprudent count was perpetually speaking of her charms to his royal master, Victor Amadeus, king of Sardinia and duke of Savoy; a sovereign, who, with many good qualities, was alternately a prey to female art, capricious infatuation, and unavailing repentance.

Hearing so much of the countess de Verue, and her husband frequently boasting how much she excelled all the ladies he saw, the king asked why he did not bring her to Turin? As if impatient of the happiness he enjoyed, and in an unlucky moment, he introduced her at court: she became a favourite with the queen, who little suspected that she was encouraging a rival in the affections of her husband.

Amadeus soon became passionately fond of her. Princes and kings, it has been said, make rapid strides in love: the countess, fascinated by royal attentions, irritated by some real or imaginary neglect on the part of her husband, forgot her duty, and forfeited her reputation.

A separate establishment, guards, and other accompaniments of royalty, soon proclaimed to the indignant public her splendid infamy.

The injured queen was for a long time unacquainted with their amours, till with a design of showing the height of his regard for

Digitized by Google

his fair favourite, and in that peculiar fatality, which often accompanies guilt, Victor actually invited his royal consort to a public entertainment, given in honour of the birth of a child he had by the countess.

It was not till the company sat down to table that the eyes of the unhappy wife were open to the cruel and unfeeling conduct of her husband. The guilty countess was adorned with some of the most valuable of the jewels, which had been presented to the queen on her marriage; naturally provoked at such indecorous and unfeeling treatment, after reproaching them for thus adding insult to injury, the queen immediately left the room.

For the honour of the count, it ought to be recorded, that the moment he perceived the consequences of his folly approaching, he could not reconcile it to himself to remain a silent and contented spectator of domestic dishonour; he repented a thousand times, as we all do, of our indiscretions,—*when it is too late.*

Having demanded an audience of the king, which, as guilt is always a coward, was denied, in a short interview with his infatuated wife, he pointed out the ingratitude and baseness of her conduct; spoke of the frail texture of royal attachments, and unlawful love; professed himself ready to forgive what had passed, if she would directly separate from her seducer, and with her husband—whom she once professed to love—quit Turin for ever.

Their conversation was interrupted by a message from the king, who probably dreaded the result of so trying a struggle: but the lady showing no symptom of returning duty, the count left her in agonies; and, after indignantly rejecting a pension of two hundred thousand livres, settled on him by the king, the count quitted Turin, and repaired to Paris.

In the blandishments of unhallowed pleasure, and forgetful of her nuptial vows, three years passed quickly away. At length, perceiving a diminution of royal favour, stimulated by compunction, and a return of suppressed affection for her absent husband, and probably disgusted, as every sensible and delicate woman must be, at her degraded condition, which, excepting the thin veil of splendor, differed in no essential from the odious and obscene situation of a prostitute, with the additional character of a foul and ungrateful adulteress, the countess determined to leave the king.

Taking advantage of his absence, on a journey to Chambery, and assisted by her brother, who resided at Paris, and with whom she

Digitized by Google

had corresponded on the subject, relays of post-horses were provided at short distances; she departed from Turin, and was half way to Paris before Amadeus was apprised of her departure.

The queen's jewels, with a letter for the king, were found on her toilet;—she apologized for her conduct, imputing it to the anguish of repentance for her sinful life; she expressed the warmest sense of his kindness and attention, and concluded with earnestly entreating his majesty to be reconciled to the queen, as it would add considerably to her peace of mind to hear that she was no longer the occasion of separating him from so good and worthy a woman.

Victor, chagrined at her abrupt departure, and apparent want of tenderness, bitterly cursed the whole sex in a transport of rage; but impelled rather by necessity than inclination, he reluctantly followed her advice.

The countess, unhappy although considerably enriched, and still feeling the impressions of her first love, which, however faithless or unworthy the object of it, or we ourselves may prove, we never recollect without regret; the countess, in the hope of being able to compensate for her failure by her future good conduct, and probably wishing to emerge from the infamy of her condition, planned a reconciliation with her husband.

This purpose she wished to accomplish without subjecting herself to the mortification of a notorious refusal. An opportunity soon offered of putting her scheme into execution, and in her own way.

A public entertainment, with a grand masquerade, being announced to be given by a prince of the blood, a few louis-d'ors to his valet enabled the lady to find out that the count de Verue was to be present, and the dress he was to wear.

While the unfaithful wife was making these inquiries, she could not help detaining the servant, an old and faithful domestic of the family, to ask him a few questions concerning his master—the life he led, and the company he kept.

The feelings of the countess may be easily imagined, when the valet informed her that his master neither enjoyed health nor spirits since he left Turin; that his sister, alarmed at the state of her brother's health, had insisted on his consulting a physician, who described the disease as an affection of the mind, entirely out of the reach of medicine, and recommended company and dissipation.

On this principle the unhappy man had been prevailed on to

Digitized by Google

promise his sister that he would accompany her to the masquerade. The valet added, that the count saw little company, but spent the greatest part of his time in his own room; that his chief attention seemed occupied by a picture, on which he fixed his melancholy eyes for hours together. "A picture," replied the countess, with augmented emotion,—"a picture! and of whom?"—"Of yourself, madam," said the valet, in an emphatic expressive manner, and immediately quitted the apartment. The adulteress, as if a dagger had pierced her vitals, instantly sunk on the floor in the agonies of bitter repentance.

While she had been passing her unhallowed hours in chambering and wantonness, her deserted husband, the object of her earliest love, and for whom, even in the moments of infidelity, she was not able wholly to suppress her affection, her deserted husband had been solitary, disconsolate, comfortless, and unhappy; still doting on the unfaithful blaster of all his joys.

Such reflections stimulated the countess to pursue her purpose with augmented eagerness; she prepared for the masquerade, and resolved to appear in the assumed character of Diana.

The day which was to decide her fate at length arrived; and as midnight approached, being conveyed to the festive spot, she was literally what she appeared to be, the goddess of the night. Her splendid and expensive dress, ornamented with jewels which were not within the reach of common finances, and her superior air and deportment, attracting general attention.

It was some time before the count appeared: when at last he entered the room, supported by his sister, his debilitated appearance and slow pace soon caught her eye,—HE WAS THE GHOST OF DEPARTED JOY.

Having seated himself near where she sat, the countess soon contrived to enter into conversation with him, in that kind of audible whisper which, on such occasions, is the general vehicle of folly or of crime. From the state of her feelings she was unable to exhibit external gaiety, while discontent sat heavy on her heart.

Affecting, or actually experiencing indisposition, and hinting a wish to retire, she mentioned, with regret, that her carriage was sent home with orders not to return till a late hour. The count, interested in the fate of the fair stranger, offered to attend her home in his own coach, which he had ordered to wait, designing to make only a short stay. With apparent reluctance, but inward satisfac-

Digitized by Google

tion, she accepted his offer; and they were driven to a house, in magnificence nearly approaching to a palace, in the Fauxbourg, St. Germaine.

The count, though ill able, insisted on handing the lady from his coach. As she descended, the mask, by accident or design, dropped from her face, and discovered that countenance he had so often looked on with tenderness and rapture, drowned in tears.

He paused for a moment, distracted by love, which was still ardent, and resentment proportionably keen; the latter predominated, and, in the anguish of a husband irreparably injured, he turned from the woman he once adored, without uttering a word.

The miserable countess, sinking under the horrors of her situation, was conveyed by the attendants to her apartment; and De Verue, notwithstanding the state of his health, soon after joined a regiment on actual service, and met with that death he had long and ardently desired.

This is *another* of the numerous instances daily occurring, in which a little prudence, and a little common sense, would have prevented irretrievable calamity.

The count de Verue had too high an opinion of his wife's chastity, and thought she would, like gold, be more pure for passing through the fire;—poor human nature is not made of materials for such trials;—LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION is a safe axiom, laid down by one who well knew, because he made us what we are.

COMPARISONS.

PLATO has very sagaciously observed, that of all the shipwrecks to which the human understanding is liable on the sea of ratiocination, the most common is that of splitting on the rock of false comparisons, or similitudes.

LORD NELSON.

FROM a production of the pen of Mr. SHERIDAN, employed on such a subject as Lord NELSON, every reader will expect much. Yet no reader will be disappointed in his expectations from the following inscription on the tablet of the statue erected to that distinguished commander, which has been recently exposed to public view in Guild Hall, London.

Digitized by Google

TO

HORATIO VISCOUNT AND BARON NELSON,

Vice-Admiral of the White, and Knight of the most Honourable Order of the Bath:

A Man, amongst the few who appear
At different periods, to have been created
To promote the grandeur, and add to the security of nations:
Inciting by their high example their fellow mortals
Through all succeeding times, to pursue the course
That leads to the exaltation of our imperfect nature.

PROVIDENCE,

That planted in Nelson's breast an ardent passion for renown,
Had bounteously endowed him with the transcendent talents
Necessary to the great purposes
He was destined to accomplish.

At an early period of life
He entered into the naval service of his country:
And early were the instances which mark'd
The fearless[illegible]re and enterprise of his character:
Uniting to the loftiest spirit and the justest title to self-confidence,
A strict and humble obedience to
The sovereign rule of discipline and subordination.
Rising by due gradation to command,
He infused into the bosoms of those he led
The valorous ardor and enthusiastic zeal
For the service of his King and Country
Which animated his own;
And while he acquired the love of all,
By the sweetness and moderation of his temper,
He inspired a universal confidence
In the never-failing resources of his capacious mind.

It will be for History to relate
The many great exploits, through which,
Solicitous of peril, and regardless of wounds,
He became the glory of his profession!
But it belongs to this brief record of his illustrious career
To say, that he commanded and conquered
At the Battles of the NILE and COPENHAGEN:
Victories never before equalled.
Yet afterwards surpassed by his own late achievement,
The Battle of TRAFALGAR!
Fought on the 21st of October, in the year 1805.

On that day, before the conclusion of the action,
He fell, mortally wounded;
But the sources of life and sense failed not until it was known to
Him that the destruction of the enemy being completed,
The glory of his country and his own had attained their summit;
Then laying his hand on his brave heart,
With a look of exalted resignation to the will
Of the Supreme Disposer of the Fate of Man and Nations,
He expired.

The Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council,
Of the City of London,
Have caused this Monument to be erected;
Not in the presumptuous hope of sustaining the departed Hero's memory,
But to manifest their estimation of the Man,
And their admiration of his deeds.
This Testimony of their Gratitude,
They trust will remain as immortal
As their own renowned City shall exist.
The period to
NELSON'S FAME
Can only be
THE END OF TIME!

Digitized by Google

NEW PLAYS.

It were to be wished that, without violating the rights of the people, some legal power could be erected to prevent the representation of stupid plays; and that, instead of a lord chamberlain, a committee were to be appointed to examine each production, and report upon its qualities. This committee we would have composed of gentlemen of acknowledged taste; and if it were for nothing else but one saying of his, we would make Mr. Sheridan perpetual chairman.—On the 12th of May, 1807, he, from the election hustings at Covent-garden, paid this keen and just compliment to his cotemporary dramatists. Talking of a low blackguard in the crowd, who had been railing at him with such coarse wit as the nomenclature of St. Giles's supplied him with, Mr. Sheridan said to the people, "I can assure you that, if political affairs had not drawn my atten-"tion of late from the theatre, *I would back that person for writing* "*a play against all the authors who bring out the* TRASH *of the pre-*"*sent day!!*"

The present year is likely to be more than ordinarily prolific of this TRASH, this murderer-drama trash.—Before us lies a list of plays—such trash!! Were the bones of Shakspeare yet sticking together, his skeleton would turn in its coffin at the bare mention of them. Yet we must introduce them to our readers.

First, a play called

OURSELVES.

Mark, reader, how much even a partial English writer, endeavouring to make the most of it, can say of this piece.

"A new play has been presented at the Lyceum, under the title of *Ourselves*. This play is certainly not intitled to take very high ground, but it would certainly be equally unjust to deny it a very considerable merit. The authoress of it is the lady to whom the public is indebted for the *School for Friends*. It is accordingly marked with the character of that drama; it is somewhat too sentimental and too heavy, but is not deficient in nature and interest. The plot, moreover, has all the ordinary faults of plots taken from novels rather than from the shifting scene of life. Concealed fathers, fortunes unexpectedly dropt from the clouds, and thousands tossed about as so much dirt, are all too removed from common life and daily use to intitle any comedy to take a high rank which deals in them. The world however is not so barren, but that even intricate

Digitized by Google

plots may be really found on the stage of life, and the dramatist would do well to transfer them as they are to his canvas.

"The dramatists of the present day are all spoiled by the puerile taste after what they term incident and bustle; in pursuit of which incident and of which bustle they outrage all nature and probability, and reduce the drama to a mere brisk farce. Another class, on the other hand, being determined to instruct, forget that it is necessary to amuse; they accordingly plunge into *sentiment*, and become insufferably dull. There are not more than three sentimental plays in the whole catalogue of acting dramas; and it is a matter of astonishment to us why this kind of writing has not gone out of fashion.

"The dialogue of these kind of plays is of the same nature with the plot. It is a mixture of silk and worsted, of fustian and satin, which has no existence but on the stage. The ordinary language of life is never in measured sentences. Nothing is so tedious, so intolerable, as these speaking ladies and gentlemen.

"The drama of *Ourselves*, however, seems to be one of the best of the kind; but as the whole kind is in no favour with us, we cannot find it in our hearts to give it much praise.—It is, perhaps, as good as Kelly's *False Delicacy*, the parent of all this sentimental trash."

The next is a comedy, called

THE GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY.

By an advertisement in a London paper, we are told that this is the production of Mr. HOLMAN.—And the following is the account given of it by the London critics.

"The plot of 'The Gazette Extraordinary' arises out of an apparent noncompliance with certain limitations under the will of Lord De Mallory's grandfather; by one of which, Lady Julia Sandforth is compelled either to receive the hand of Lord De Mallory in marriage, or forfeit the whole of her fortune. That young lady, who has not seen his lordship for some years, became early prepossessed against him, and, rather than marry against her inclinations, quits De Mallory castle, and places herself under the protection of Mr. Heartworth, a plain, honest, blunt, country gentleman, whose father having married a sister of the deceased Lord De Mallory, was the innocent cause of her present embarrassing situation. The countess dowager De Mallory, incensed at the refusal of Lady Julia Sandforth to marry her son, upon his return from abroad, endeavours to

Digitized by Google

incense him against that young lady, by stating, that the cause of her abrupt departure was a secret affection for Sir Harry Aspen, and urges him to fulfil the intentions of his grandfather, by offering his hand to Miss Alford. Lord De Mallory, whose inclinations towards Lady Julia are very different from those of that young lady towards him, goes in pursuit of the runaway; and arriving at the house of Mr. Heartworth under the assumed name of his friend Major Clayton, prevails upon Dr. Suitall (a self-sufficient coxcomb) to be admitted to a party of pleasure on the lake of Windermere, in a fete given by Mr. Heartworth in honour of Lady Julia's arrival. In the course of this aquatic excursion, circumstances occur by which the assumed Major Clayton wins the affections of Lady Julia, and strongly ingratiates himself in the good opinion of Mr. Heartworth, who, upon the recommendation of Dr. Suitall, imagines him to be the officer of that name, whose gallant conduct in the East Indies he had read an account of in the gazette extraordinary. Mr. Heartworth, accidentally discovering the mutual affection of Lord De Mallory and Lady Julia, presses the latter to accept his lordship's hand; but he, indignant at his rejection as Lord De Mallory, declines that honour, and leaves them abruptly. Lady Julia, in this perplexing situation, is prevailed upon by Randall to return to De Mallory castle, to vindicate her character from the unjust imputations of the dowager Countess De Mallory. An *eclaircissement* takes place between all the parties concerned in the will of Lord De Mallory's grandfather; and his lordship is united to Lady Julia with the full consent of his mother.

"We regret that we can give very little praise to a plot of this kind, and almost as little to the style in which it is executed in the detail of the acts and scenes.

"Of all plots there are none more vile than what may be called the *novel-plots*, the nature and manners of a circulating library.

"The magazine of life produces a very sufficient variety for a writer of genius and observation. Why collect the refuse of Leadenhall-street? Why deal in modes and combinations which were never seen in real life?

"The proper source of ridicule is in natural humour, and not in situations. Humour attaches to character; situation belongs properly to farce and caricature. It is very easy to introduce a man ignorant of the persons with whom he is discoursing, and thereby, by making him speak under this error and ignorance, cause him to utter things

Digitized by Google

which are incongruous and contrary to the true state of their respective relations. This incongruity it is that constitutes the ridiculous, and surely nothing is so easy, so common-place, and so absurd, as this kind of humour. The characters were well supported by the performers. The dialogue of this piece was occasionally forcible and vigorous."

The next, and (we will not say the best, for where nothing is good, nothing can be best) the least bad, because the most interesting, is a melo-drama, intitled

TIMOUR THE TARTAR,

concerning which the language of a London critic is as follows:

"A modern French writer has observed that, on the first night of a new piece, the critic is constrained to attend so much to the performances of the pit, that if some confusion should appear in his account of what passes on the stage, it ought in candor to be forgiven. For this indulgence, on the present occasion, we feel it necessary to put in our claim, as if we were not obliged to pay particular attention to the scenes of the pit, the proceedings of the upper boxes and gallery were such as to give greater interruption to the anxious observer; and the efforts of the majority of the house to overpower the hostility thus manifested, had the effect of heightening his perplexity.

"Before the commencement of the piece, it was evident there was a strong party against it. The opposition threw a great number of handbills from the upper boxes, containing (as we understood) something against equestrian performances being introduced at the regular theatre. These, however, met with a very unfavourable reception; nearly the whole were torn to pieces, and those who had dispersed them were fervently hissed.

"This melo-drama (said to be from the pen of M. G. Lewis) is uncommonly interesting from beginning to end.

"Timour, the Tartar, having usurped the throne, confines the son of the late king in a tower, the care of which he intrusts to his father, Oglou. Faithful to his sovereign, yet afraid of his fierce son, Oglou becomes the jailer of the young prince, with a view of alleviating his sufferings, and of ultimately restoring him to liberty. The mother of the prince imposes herself on Timour as the Georgian princess (to whom he wished, for purposes of ambition, to be united) in the hope of being enabled to snatch her son from confinement. Oglou knows her, but conceals his knowledge of her

Digitized by Google

from Timour. Subsequently, however, he discloses who she is; and in consequence she is confined. He visits her in prison, and explains away his seeming perfidy by informing her that Octa, who had just arrived, would infallibly have betrayed her, had he not appeared her enemy; and thus she would have been plunged in the same distress without its being in his power to assist her, as he might hope to do, by thus retaining his power, and the confidence of Timour. He forms a plan for her escape at the hour of midnight, and conducts the young prince to her chamber. The plan is frustrated by the presence of Timour, who, smitten with the charms of the queen, resolves on immediately espousing her. The young prince is nearly sacrificed, but is at length with much difficulty placed in safety with his friends, the Georgians, who come to attack the castle. Timour flies to the ramparts with the queen, and threatens his assailants with her death, if they refuse to surrender the prince. This threat he is about to execute, when his arm is arrested by his father. The queen flies, Timour pursues, and the former precipitates herself from the ramparts into the waves which are seen below. The prince flies to her aid on horseback, and saves her from a watery grave. A general battle ensues between the Georgians and the partisans of Timour; a breach is made in the wall of the castle with a battering ram; and finally, the tyrant, vanquished, is about to fall by the sword of a Georgian, when the entrance of Oglou saves his life, which the queen had previously promised should be spared. The piece ends with the destruction of Timour's castle by fire.

"Such is the rough outline of this piece, which greatly surpasses in merit as in splendor any thing of the kind which we have seen for a long time. As a literary production it may not rank very high; but as an ingenious dramatic production, rich in contrivance and incident, and above all, in interest, it is intitled to great praise. In some parts there is rather a confusion; and in the first part of the second act the action is too much hurried. The situations are however good; and the characters strongly drawn, and admirably supported, insure it a long run of popularity. In every part there is something to strike and to please; and with all the grandeur it has none of the fatiguing dulness usually attendant on stage pageantry.

"Our limits will not at present admit of our particularizing all the scenes which astonish with their extraordinary grandeur in this

Digitized by Google

truly magnificent spectacle. In the first act, the splendid combat scene exceeded all we had previously witnessed. The opening of the second act charmed us with a scene representing a chamber in the castle of Timour. Than this beautiful display of eastern grandeur nothing could be more strikingly superb. The transparent glow which burst on the admiring eye seemed the effect of magic, and not only filled us with astonishment at the voluptuous grandeur of Timour, but with admiration of the taste of the artist by whom it was designed. The charmingly tasteful manner in which it was adorned with mother of pearl, and all which nature could furnish, and a chastened fancy select, rendered it uncommonly interesting, and won from the audience repeated peals of applause. The last scene, in which the castle of Timour, and a beautiful water-fall, are the most conspicuous objects, would be injured in its effect by too minute a description. It is impossible to conceive any thing more striking; and the exertions of the horses have a wonderful effect.

"We have already paid a tribute to the merits of the performers. The music, by King, for its beauty and grandeur, is admirably adapted to the piece; and if interesting scenes, animated action, and magnificent decorations, heightened by genuine harmony, can gain upon the town, those most disposed to condemn the introduction of horses will not be sorry that, in return for their sneers and opposition, the managers of this theatre have at length thought proper to give them a *Tartar*."

The following hoax upon Mr. Kemble, and just sneer at his *picturesquing* and *spectacling*, appeared in a London paper.

"It is said that Mr. Kemble is to appear in the new melo-drama, from the pen of Mr. Monk Lewis, which is forthcoming at Covent-garden theatre. One great object of this new drama is to introduce a grand equestrian spectacle; and it is said that on this occasion Mr. Kemble *himself is to be mounted on a white charger*."

Whether it was this paragraph that made him ashamed of this equestrian exploit or not, it is not for us to conjecture—but Mr. Kemble did not appear *mounted on a white charger*. That task devolved on Mrs. H. Johnston who, as the papers say, "mounted on a white horse, appeared to uncommon advantage, and seemed to manage her courser with great courage and address."

By one of that kind of associations of ideas which we frequently experience, and which delight us by bringing our youth and age into company together, we found our thoughts drawn back, by this ca-

Digitized by Google

pering upon white horses, to a story which, poured into the ear of our infancy, became an article of our faith, and remained so till we reached the age of puberty, and, we verily believe, will continue to hold converse with our fancy to the end of life. About a mile from the town where our boyish days were spent, there was a vast open space, where it was said, and believed, the fairies took delight to exercise;—and there, many good souls declared they had frequently seen the king and queen of the fairies galloping on *white chargers* in a ring, round and round by the hour, and followed by troops of subject fairies.

As Mr. Lewis spares no pains to get information on those important articles, and has no doubt travelled in Ireland, a country more deeply versed than most others in that kind of lore, it is not unlikely that he may have heard this story. Indeed, the idea of riding on the stage *on a white steed* is so exactly the thing, that we should not be surprised to hear of some old Irish nurse laying claim to her share in the merit of it. The age of infant Roscii and Rosciæ is past, or it is probable that Miss Mudie or some other infant would be employed to ride as queen of the fays.—Oh Shakspeare, Shakspeare!

"Oh flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified!"

From a subsequent publication we extract the following observations.—"Timour the Tartar seems drawn by the author as a likeness of Bonaparte; vulgarly ambitious, impetuously cruel, the offspring of ignorance and poverty. There wants nothing but what must one day or other be the denouement, *defeat*, to be an exact portrait.

"The new grand spectacle of Timour the Tartar promises to exceed even Blue Beard in attraction and popularity. Had it been produced earlier in the season, the profit of the theatre must have been immense; but now Timour will be stopt in the midst of his successful career by the benefits, which begin in three weeks, when the cavalry will troop off to their country quarters."

Lastly, a new opera was brought out at the Lyceum, in the Strand, and received such unqualified disapprobation, that we shall in all probability be saved the mortification of seeing it on this side of the ocean. The title of this piece, which was no doubt execrable or it would not have been damned, is

THE AMERICANS.

By what we have been able to collect respecting it, the main spring which sets the business of this opera in motion is an Irish

Digitized by Google

author who, not finding that encouragement to which he thinks himself intitled, passes over to this country to surprise the people of it and make his fortune with his talents. Being an Irishman, he is of course made a blunderer, for that seems to be the only purpose for which an Hibernian is ever introduced upon the stage: and this makes all the Irish characters on the stage so like to each other that when one is seen the whole of them are sufficiently known. This Irishman now in question, being landed in America, obtrudes himself and his works upon every one he meets, and insists upon reading some of them to each stranger that comes across him. Though there is nothing new or original in this thought, it is sufficiently calculated to give rise to comic incidents and to sharp reflections, had it been well managed; but as the wit of it was already worn to shreds by repeated trahsmission through the jest books,—as the humour was low, coarse, and vulgar,—as the only features of novelty of which it could boast belonged to characters disgusting either by their vice or folly,—as the plot was bad and unconnected,—and above all, as it contained a calumny no less false than insulting on that most harmless, useful, and respectable of all sects, the QUAKERS, it met, as it deserved, pointed contempt and severe reprobation from the British audience.

How deficient soever the London audience may be, on certain occasions, in dramatic taste, they never fail to evince a sense of justice too strong to be warped by any temporary gratification that can be derived from even the best comic performance. We could recount many instances of this, but will for the present confine ourselves to one which happened about three years ago. An afterpiece made its appearance, and was so replete with humour that it became very popular. The comic effect of it arose from the embarrassments to which the hero is subjected *in his course of wooing*, by his endeavours to keep his name of "HOG-FLESH" concealed, and by the ridiculous distresses attending the detection of it. While the people were in the full tide of enjoyment of this pleasant piece, a discovery was accidentally made that a respectable family of the name of *Hog flesh* actually did exist in London, when the public at once put the farce down, choosing rather to dispense with their nightly gratification, than to mortify or encroach upon the feelings of a worthy family.

Digitized by Google

RICHARD CUMBERLAND, ESQ.

We are sorry to have it to relate that the muses of Britain have wept over the bier of CUMBERLAND, and that Genius and Literature have now seen the last of that society of their chosen sons, which met in Gerard-street, laid in the grave. The British prints inform us, that this excellent man and charming writer died last month, after a short illness, in the EIGHTY-FIFTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

As a dramatic writer, his name will live as long as the English stage; and some of his works will continue to be represented for the same period. His most popular play was The West Indian; and after a long interval, his Wheel of Fortune was rendered hardly less popular by the acting of Mr. Kemble. Mr. Cumberland was universally admitted to be a profound scholar, as well as an able writer in various departments of literature, and a poet of no inferior class. He abounded in anecdotes, which he related in a terse, elegant, and pleasing manner; altogether, Mr. Cumberland may be considered as one of the most distinguished ornaments of British literature. He was the son of Dr. Cumberland, Bishop of Kilmore, by the youngest daughter of the celebrated Dr. Bentley.

W. BOSCAWEN, ESQ.

The friends of literature and admirers of genius will join us in lamenting the death of W. BOSCAWEN, ESQ., who died nearly at the same time with Mr. Cumberland. He was an excellent scholar, a good poet, and a truly worthy man. His translation of HORACE is esteemed the best English version, in point of accuracy and spirit. He was one of the Commissioners of the Victualling Office.

We hope our correspondent, 'KAIS,' will excuse the delay that has taken place in the publication of the following lines, which have too much merit to be overlooked, if they had not, by accident, been mixed with other papers.

Communicated for the Mirror of Taste.

TO PLEASURE.

Ah, Pleasure, say why dies thy light
Like moon-beams on the eye of day?
Why still does Sorrow shed her night,
And dim with mists thy living ray?

Digitized by Google

Ah say, why fades thy rose so soon,
While yet so perfum'd is its breath?
Why are its dew-drops drunk ere noon?
Ere eve why sinks thy flow'r in death?

I drank thy cup; thy wreath I wore;
The dregs remain—the flow'rs have faded:
Oh ne'er can future joys restore
The peace by recollection shaded.

KAIS.

FRAGMENTS OF OLD ENGLISH POETRY.

TO THE WATER NYMPHS, DRINKING AT THE FOUNTAIN.

Reach, with your whiter hands, to me
Some crystal of the spring;
And I about the cup shall see
Fresh lilies flourishing.

Or else, sweet nymphs, do you but this—
To the glass your lips incline;
And I shall see by that one kiss
The water turn'd to wine.

TO ELECTRA.

I dare not ask a kiss,
I dare not beg a smile,
Lest, having that or this,
I might grow proud the while.

No, no; the utmost share
Of my desire shall be
Only to kiss that air
That lately kissed thee.

WHAT KIND OF MISTRESS HE WOULD HAVE.

Be the mistress of my choice
Plain in manners, clear in voice;
Be she witty, more than wise,
Pure enough, though not precise;

Digitized by Google

Be she showing in her dress,
Like a civil wilderness,
That the curious may detect
Order in a sweet neglect;
Be she rolling in her eye,
Tempting all the passers-by,
And each ringlet of her hair
An enchantment, or a snare,
For to catch the lookers-on,
But herself held fast by none;
Let her Lucrece all day be,
Thais in the night to me;
Be she such as neither will
Famish me, nor overfill.

TO JEALOUSY.

O Jealousy, thou art
The canker of the heart;
And mak'st all hell
Where thou dost dwell;
For pity be
No fury or no firebrand to me!
Far from me I'll remove
All thoughts of irksome love;
And turn to snow,
Or crystal grow,
To keep still free,
O soul-tormenting Jealousy, from thee!

THE PRIMROSE.

Ask me why I send you here
This sweet infanta of the year—
Ask me, why I send to you
This primrose thus besprent with dew—
I will whisper to your ears
The sweets of love are mix'd with tears.

Ask me, why this flow'r does shew
So yellow-green and sickly too—

Digitized by Google

Ask me, why the stalk is weak
And bending, yet it doth not break—
I will answer—these discover
What fainting hopes are in a lover.

UPON JULIA'S HAIR FILLED WITH DEW.

Dew sat on Julia's hair,
And spangled too,
Like leaves that laden are
With trembling dew;
Or glitter'd to my sight,
As when the beams
Have their reflected light
Danc'd by the streams.

UPON HIS DEPARTURE HENCE.

Thus I
Pass by
And die,
As one
Unknown
And gone;
I'm made
A shade
And laid
I' th' grave;
There have
My cave,
Where well
I dwell,
Farewel!

TO HIS VERSES.

What will ye, my poor orphans, do
When I must leave the world and you?
Who'll give you then a shelt'ring shed,
Or credit ye, when I am dead?
Who'll let ye by their fireside sit,

Digitized by Google

Although ye have a stock of wit,
Already coin'd, to pay for it?
I cannot tell; unless there be
Some race of old humanity
Left (of the large heart and long hand)
Alive, as noble Westmoreland,
Or gallant Newark, which brave two
May fost'ring fathers be to you.
If not, expect to be no less
Ill us'd than babes left fatherless.

AMERICAN ELOQUENCE.

It may be doubted whether any work hitherto published in America has brought to the literature of the country a larger accession of utility and elegance, and consequently of credit, than the selection made by Doctor Chapman from the parliamentary and forensic eloquence of the illustrious orators of Great Britain and Ireland.

It has been, for many years, a subject of deep regret to the learned men of those parts of the world in which the English language is spoken, that of the mass of eloquence which placed the orators of the British islands in an advantageous comparison with the greatest of Greece or Rome, so very little should have been transmitted to the present times. Till the reporting of public debates became a special calling in the hands of men of learning and ingenuity, the speeches of the greatest orators scarcely survived the day of their delivery, and, having served the fugitive purpose of the argument to which they were applied, were for ever lost to the world—in no degree known to any but those who heard them, and by those even forgotten in a few days, and buried in the general miscellany of thought and action. Hence it is that, while we hear their cotemporaries speak in wonder and enthusiastic rapture of the powers of a Flood, a Burgh, a Hutchinson, and, above all, of Anthony Malone, we can scarcely find a relic of the speeches of these great men sufficient to impart the remotest idea of what their style of eloquence was. Of the last of them there is not a vestige left, while the evidence of his superiority to all other men is so complete as to supersede every doubt upon the subject. What Betterton in his day, and Garrick since, were in acting, Malone

Digitized by Google

was in oratory: for, when an orator, in England or Ireland, was said to be best, it was still understood to be with the exception of Malone:* like those great actors, too, his genius has left no mark behind it.

> Passion's wild break, and frown that awes the sense,
> And all the charms of gentle eloquence,
> All perishable!—like the electric fire,
> But strike the frame, and, as they strike, expire!
> Incense too pure a bodied flame to bear;
> Its fragrance charms the sense, and blends with air.

It is indeed to be lamented that Ireland, to which envy itself is compelled to allow the palm of eloquence, has been still more negligent than her sister island in preserving the speeches of her orators. Had Burke or Sheridan wasted their eloquence at home, posterity would never be able to form a conception of those wonderful specimens of eloquence on which, in future ages, they will rapturously dwell in the compilation of Dr. Chapman.

Since debate-reporting became a trade, every speech of the smallest consequence, whether at the bar or in the senate, has had its fair chance of transmission to posterity. In its first and most imperfect state, it is presented to the public in a newspaper, where all rafiks peruse and judge of it. If it possess not intrinsic merit to recommend it on its own account, when the subject on which it was spoken ceases to agitate the feelings and warp the opinions of the public, it is consigned "to the monument of the Capulets;" but if it does, it is printed in a correct and perfect state, and with the authority and consent, perhaps with the corrections too, of the speaker, is given to the public in the form of a pamphlet.

Thus rescued from immediate oblivion, its preservation would still be rendered uncertain, by the diminutiveness of its size and the little importance annexed to such books, if it were left to shift for itself in the fugitive shape of a pamphlet. Hence it has too often happened that some of the most precious remains of eloquence that ever were published, after having had their day of admiration, are now lost, or overlooked, or perhaps exist only in the closet of some bookish churl, who thinks that its value would be lost if others were allowed to participate in it.

The plan of Dr. Chapman is a complete and satisfactory remedy for these evils: and the most splendid monuments of human genius,

* So said lords Hardwicke, Mansfield, and Camden.

Digitized by Google

of which any age or country could ever boast, are in his "Select Speeches" provided for the delight and improvement of posterity, wrought by him into a shape which bids defiance to the outrages of accident or time.

With these impressions fresh on our mind, we hasten to congratulate this country while we announce that Dr. Chapman has now ready for the press a series of AMERICAN SPEECHES, preserved in the same way, and, we dare to say, selected and executed with no less ability. In this respect America will have a considerable advantage over the old countries: for here, the practice of reporting has been coeval with the practice of public speaking, so that few speeches of any consequence have been entirely lost; yet as the shape in which they have been transmitted is rather precarious, a form of greater bulk and importance is necessary to secure to them permanence, and place them beyond the reach of accident or oblivion.

A publication of that kind being confessedly of the first national importance, it must impart satisfaction to every thinking American to hear that the execution of it has fallen into the hands of a person in all respects so well qualified for such an undertaking. If to perpetuate the eloquence of America, and to transmit the most correct and noble domestic models for the instruction and imitation of the rising genius of the country be a desirable object, what man can be more able to accomplish it than a native American, of approved genius—bred a scholar—trained even from his boyish days to range in classic ground, and from natural taste, as well as education, an enthusiastic lover of eloquence? In the prefatory remarks to each speech in the selection already published, it is easy to perceive that the author has not contented himself with a barren admiration of the eloquence of others, but is himself no common proficient in that enchanting science. Nor need we go farther for a proof of this assertion than a piece which now lies open before us, and which, merely because accident has thrown it first in our way, we extract for the beauty of the writing, although there are some points of opinion in it from which we must for ever cordially dissent.

PREFATORY REMARKS OF Dr. CHAPMAN TO Mr. PITT'S SPEECH ON THE UNION.

"Notwithstanding what has been urged to the contrary, it will "not be difficult to show that the administration of William Pitt "was eminently distinguished by the maxims of an enlarged wis-

Digitized by Google

" dom, and of the most liberal, enlightened, and beneficial policy. " There entered into its views nothing sordid, or low, or vulgar, or " wily, or diminutive. The traits of his political conduct partook " conspicuously of the expansiveness of his mind, and the genero- " sity and elevation of his nature. The proofs of this position may " be displayed in a brief summary of the leading measures of his " political life.

" William Pitt was the honest, and faithful, and zealous advocate " of parliamentary reform so long as prudence warranted it.

" He corrected the abuses, mitigated the violence, and restrained " the injustice of the India government.

" He constantly opposed, with all his weight and authority, the " slave trade.

" He resisted the dangerous and unconstitutional principles " which were advanced in the memorable discussion concerning " the regency.

" He cooperated* to settle by a declaratory statute, in a way the " most favourable to the rights of the subject, and against the sen- " timents of the highest legal characters, the important doctrine of " libel.

" He established, with different countries, treaties of commercial " intercourse as liberal, as they were reciprocally advantageous.

" He took steps to guarantee the balance of power, and to pre- " serve the peace of Europe, which were acknowledged to be dig- " nified, wise, and magnanimous.

" He acquiesced in several concessions to the catholics of Ireland, " and was known to be disposed entirely to relieve them of their " restrictions and disabilities.

" He succeeded ultimately, by the most consummate manage- " ment, in effecting a union between the sister isles, thus strength- " ening, by knitting together, the detached members of the empire.

" While the surrounding states were torn asunder, and demolish- " ed by the hand of conquest, or the ebullition of a poisonous influ- " ence, and all Europe was menaced by calamity and ruin, he not " only protected his country against this array of terror, but push- " ed her on by a steady and vigorous impulse in a rapid course of " unexampled prosperity and improvement.

" Dark, and sinister, and inauspicious as this season was, he

* With Mr. Fox, the originator of the law.

Digitized by Google

" meliorated her finances; he extended her trade; he increased her " manufactures; he promoted her agriculture; he multiplied her " naval and military means; and taught her the salutary lesson, that " she had wealth, and spirit, and power to combat, as long as she " proved true to herself, the aggregated and invenomed hostility of " the world.

" Much as was accomplished by this exalted and efficient mi- " nister, it is presumable that had he been cast on times less " untoward and disjointed, he would have done still more for " his country.

" From the conviction of reason, perhaps biassed in some degree " by the general habitudes of his political thinking, and the force " of inherited prejudice, it is probable he would have directed his " attention to prune away the defects of original construction, as " well as those corruptions which have since been introduced into " the British constitution; thus rendering it as just, and perfect, in " its theoretical proportions, as it is acknowledged to be excellent " in its practical operations.

" To us, indeed, it would not be easy to select a statesman whom " history has recorded, that effected so much for his country, or " who lays claim to so large a share of the admiration and gratitude " of posterity."

ANECDOTE OF GARRICK.

It is remarked, that if you deprive a wit of applause, you knock him up for the night. Garrick was an instance of this: he was once invited, as a wit, to be the fiddle of the company, and for some time amused them highly by playing off his wit on a respectable clergyman in company. Garrick very familiarly slapped him on the shoulder; the clergyman looked at him very coolly, and said " Sir, I don't know what you mean by treating me in this manner; I never offended you, nay, I never saw you but once before, and *then* I paid five shillings for it." This so confounded Roscius, and the laugh went so completely against him, that he could scarcely open his lips for the remainder of the evening.

Digitized by Google

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

KING LEAR,—AND Mr. COOKE IN THAT CHARACTER.

THE tragedy of King Lear has been considered as of all theatrical productions the greatest favourite of nature—and the representation of the old monarch the boldest undertaking it is possible for an actor to hazard. A celebrated foreigner, astonished at the performance of Lear by Garrick, was tempted to investigate the whole play. His analysis of it has been for many years before the public, but, we rather suspect, is now out of print. It is a long time since we read it; but the impression it made was too deep ever to be effaced. To speak generally, that candid and intelligent foreigner held the character of King Lear to be the very first production of the human mind, and after telling why, he speaks to his correspondent to the following effect:—(we do not pretend to answer for the words, but the substantial meaning was this)—"You will agree with me, that the tragedy I have "thus described is the first dramatic production of nature: but you "will say '*where can an actor be found to perform the character of* "*Lear?*'—How will you be astonished then, when I affirm that it "is performed here by a person of the name of Garrick, whose "representation would almost persuade one to imagine that the "power of the poet is even exceeded by that of the actor."

In his observations on this tragedy, Doctor Johnson scarcely falls short of the foreigner alluded to. "There is no play," says he, "which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity. "The artful involutions of distinct interests—the striking opposi- "tion of contrary character—the sudden changes of fortune—and "the quick succession of events,—fill the mind with a perpetual "tumult of indignation, pity, and hope. There is no scene which "does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct "of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the "progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the poet's

Digitized by Google

" imagination, that the mind, which once ventures within it, is " hurried irresistibly along."

Of the play of King Lear, as written by Shakspeare, in truth too much cannot possibly be said. The same praise, however, cannot be extended to the barbarous mutilations of it exhibited on our modern stages. The most paltry scribblers, the most barbarous literary empirics, though dull as the fat weed that rots on Lethe's banks, have self-possession enough to think they can improve the greatest of all dramatic poets, by alterations which serve only to despoil him of his beauties, to gratify their own exorbitant vanity, and to deceive and pervert the taste of the public. This itch for alteration has been carried to a blamable extent in a variety of plays. That those of Massinger, Wycherly, and other writers, could not be performed in our days without alterations is too true: but in pruning them of their licentious passages, more taste and judgment in dramatic writing are requisite than fall to the share of one in a hundred of those self-erected reformers. But it is the praise of Shakspeare, that he and Ben Jonson are the only dramatic writers of that time who have not shamefully deformed their works with obscenity: and yet of all writers Shakspeare is the one who has suffered most from pretended reformers. They are but few who can form a conception of the havoc made and daily making in his works, of which not one acting play has escaped some sort of mutilation.

Nothing can be a stronger proof of the shallow vanity of man than this, that when seized with the itch of alteration, he always makes choice for his cobbling work of that subject which he thinks most excellent. Thus the most ruthless alterers of our great bard have been some of his greatest admirers—as if they liked him so well, that they wished to become partners with him in his fame. Dryden, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Shakspeare, and was, we believe, the first that justly appreciated his merits, was also the first who set the example of mutilating his works, and patching them up with balderdash of his own. " Shakspeare," says he, in his dialogue on dramatic poetry, " was the man who, of all modern, " and perhaps of all ancient poets, had the largest and most compre- " hensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, " and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes " any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too." Yet this high opinion was entirely overwhelmed by either the vanity or the necessities, or both, of Dryden, who immediately afterwards fell merci-

Digitized by Google

lessly upon one of our poet's most delightful, Heaven-inspired productions, The Tempest; which he altered into one of the most disgusting pieces of mummery that ever was represented on a stage. Yet this stuff held possession of the stage till Garrick, one of vanity's spoiled children, by way of turning this old reheated pie into a new pasty, converted the whole into an opera. An act for which his admiring biographer, Murphy, gives him a little gentle castigation. "Garrick," says Murphy, "ought not to have suffered such a play "to dwindle into an opera. The harmony of the versification want-"ed no aid from music. He had said in a former prologue, that *he* "*wished to lose no drop of that immortal man*, and here he lost a "tun of him. Had he revived the Tempest as it stands in the ori-"ginal, and played the part of Prospero, he would have done "justice to the god of his idolatry, and honour to himself."—The doing of that act of justice to Shakspeare, and honour to himself, however, was reserved for Mossop, whose performance of Prospero we never think of without recollections which give us pain for the past, and render us hopeless of the future.

As we intend, on some future occasion, to enter largely into the general subject of these abuses of Shakspeare, we shall at present carry it no farther than as it relates to the tragedy now before us, which has undergone the most cruel maiming and defacing from the hands, first of Mr. Nahum Tate, then of Mr. George Colman, and, in humble imitation of these, from the still more sacrilegious hands of all the managers and prompters in Great Britain, as it suited their convenience or as it squared with their interest, or their more sordid taste.

We are the more inclined to be full and explicit upon this subject because the alterations of Lear have, as Lansdowne's Merchant of Venice once did, got possession of the stage to the exclusion of Shakspeare's much better original work—and because in an old critical work, which is too often taken for conclusive authority, we mean the British Dramatic Censor, these alterations are spoken of with approbation. Nor have we the least apprehension of incurring a retort of the charge of vanity upon us for holding this opinion, when we can show that we are supported in it by the authority of Mr. Addison, who blames Tate for his alteration and declares that it has deprived the tragedy of half its beauty.

It is no justification of altering a play of Shakspeare's to say that it is rendered thereby more pleasing to a majority of the au-

Digitized by Google

dience. The poet has rights of which no one should be allowed the privilege of depriving him: he has a right to speak for himself—to have the production of his mind given to the world such as it is—and not to have fathered upon his muse the squalid brats of feeble Grub-street brains, littered in garrets or cellars. We remember a case in point, which occurred in our presence. A low comedian of the name of Jackson, who played for some time in Dublin, was in the habit of introducing into the character of Jerry Sneak, in Foote's farce of The Mayor of Garrat, a droll song called "Johnny Pringle's Pig."—Whenever he played Jerry he sung this song; and as sure as he sung it, so sure was he to be encored. Foote arrived in Dublin; and the first night the Mayor of Garrat was performed by him, Johnny Pringle's pig being encored, Foote threw out a jibe upon the song, and, of course, upon the taste of the audience—they resented it; upon which the wit, who knew better than any man in the house the ground on which he stood, boldly stepped forward, asserted his right as an author to reject interpolations,—maintained that right respectfully but firmly,—laid down the law in support of authors, and was, as he deserved to be, highly applauded,—and succeeded in having Johnny Pringle's pig exiled to its proper sty, so long at least as he remained in Dublin.

Were those alterations an improvement even, we deny their admissibility;—but as they greatly injure the play, they ought not to be endured. Where an excellent play happens to be, here and there, defaced with obscenity, the offensive parts ought to be expunged, or the piece withheld from representation: but against the introduction of any matter not belonging to the author, against any material defalcation, or any addition at all, and against the slightest change in the arrangement of the scenes, justice, common sense, criticism, taste and sound judgment will for ever set their faces. Thus we would not insist upon retaining the opening scene of Lear, because in it Gloster informs Kent of the illegitimacy of his son Edmund, in terms too coarse for female delicacy to hear: but we see no reason for dislocating the play by bringing Edmund himself forward to relate it in this place, which he might as well be left to do in that appointed by Shakspeare—that is in the second scene, in a soliloquy which, by the by, is not one atom less coarse than the part expunged. Therefore we would put Mr. Tate aside, pass over Gloster and Kent's conversation, and open the play with King Lear surrounded by his court.

Digitized by Google

With the hypercriticisms uttered upon this tragedy we have still less patience than with the alterations of Messrs. Tate and Colman. When a hypercritic once gets mounted on his hobby-horse, he seems to think that he has a right to ride over every thing. Instead of taking the character as the poet intended it, and then trying how far the language, the incidents, the sentiments, and the arrangement of the various parts of the scheme be calculated to give force and illustrate that character, they set out with finding fault with the character itself. We remember to have met with one of those hollow talkers, who pertinaciously maintained that Fielding's character of Alworthy ought to have been drawn in some particulars different from what it is—or, in other words, that it ought to be that which the author did not intend it to be: "for, sir," said this wisehead, "Mr. Alworthy ought not to have treated Jones so hastily, nor "abandoned him upon the suggestions of his enemies." It was in vain to say to this sagacious critic—Fielding intended to draw Mr. Alworthy—and he has done so—a natural character,—a good man—but not a perfect one. No; it would not do;—and because it did not square with this sage critic's idea, he would insist that Alworthy, one of the finest characters ever imagined by the human fancy, was nothing but a poor unmeaning piece of stuff—a nothing! We have now before us a long and laboured criticism on King Lear, in which the author, who by the way pronounces it the first of all dramatic productions, censures Lear, in many places, for the very things which constitute his extraordinary character; and begins by deriding the notion of Lear's measuring the division of his kingdom among his daughters, by their respective answers to the question, "*which loves us most?*"—Now, when the moral intention of Shakspeare in drawing King Lear is fully and considerately examined, it will appear that every particular point, objected to by the hypercritics, is in reality a beauty not only wonderful in the skilfulness of its application to the general purpose of the play, but absolutely essential to the full illustration of the particular character of old Lear itself.

We have heretofore* said that Shakspeare's main object in the composition of Richard the Third seemed to be "to exhibit in the "strongest colours the unlimited powers of stupendous intellect "when united with stupendous courage." In King Lear his design

* See page 183.

Digitized by Google

evidently appears to be this—to point out the danger of excessive sensibility, and to warn us that the indulgence of that benevolent impulse (precious and useful as it is when under correction) is, when unaccompanied by cool reflection, and unguided by a strict sense of duty, the source of incalculable mischiefs to the possessor, liable to extravagance, excess, and outrage; and ultimately leading to the shipwreck of felicity, fortune, and character.

If we were to judge of the feelings of men from their writings, we should be led to believe, by his plays, that sensibility was a misfortune from which Shakspeare had suffered severely: for, master as he is of every passion, we find none on which he has expatiated more frequently, more feelingly, or indeed more effectually. Without adverting to many other proofs of this, we will barely mention the characters of HAMLET, JAQUES, in As you like it, and TIMON, besides this of LEAR; in each of which we find the unhappy effects of extreme sensibility depicted, though in different shapes, in such warm language and glowing colours as nothing but a heart that acutely felt it could supply. Instructed by nature in all the diversities of the human passions, conversant in all the infirmities they produce, and skilful in discriminating their various symptoms, Shakspeare knew that they frequently produce effects apparently the most incongruous,—that the same passion frequently shows itself in the same person with the most discordant and contrary indications, and that sensibility, the most kindly and beneficent of the social impulses, if repulsed from its object, is apt to recoil to an opposite and a vitious extreme.

Lear, accustomed to authority, and to the most flattering and servile submission to his will, had never experienced any of those checks which would serve to diminish the influence of the passions over ordinary men. Having complexionally a strong sensibility, he has all his life had the means of indulging it without fear of evil consequences, or check from inconvenience. Kingly opulence enabled him to be munificent without danger—kingly authority exempted him from responsibility to any one. Thus his natural sensibility, nourished by long enjoyment, and inflamed by the flattery of those who profited by it, grew every day more dominant over his reason, till at last its dominion became perfect, while the latter, debilitated by age, and pride, and fondness, dwindled away and left him a prey to all his wayward feelings. Still he was a king,—still he had power and authority;—and so long as these re-

Digitized by Google

mained, he was safe from the worst effects of his infirmities. He might be privately smiled at for his weakness—but he could not be openly derided—he could not be trampled upon—he could not be utterly undone. Such is his condition at the opening of the tragedy; Shakspeare judiciously making his appearance in the play commence with that first act of superlative folly which strips him of his authority and leads to his undoing.

It is the nature of extreme sensibility so far to transform its victims from the ordinary mould of men of this world that they never fail to ascribe their own dispositions to those whom they regard, and to expect from them correspondent feelings and affections. They never dream of—nay, they will not believe it possible that any difference of mind could exist between them. On this ground we find old Lear so confident in the affections of his beloved daughters, and most of all in his youngest whom most he loves, that he resolves to give up every thing to them, and to become in his turn dependent on their affections. This naturally leads him to the question which of them loves him most; in their answers to which he makes sure, by a reference to his own heart, of the fondest from her of whom he is most fond. Childish as this may appear to hasty critics, it is nevertheless founded in an accurate observance of human nature.

> Now, our joy,
> Although the last, not least; to whose young love
> The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
> Strive to be interess'd; what can you say to draw
> A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

All the lecturers on morality in the world could not give, in the most elaborate details, a more copious view of the debilitating effects of sensibility than Shakspeare has in this one scene. As it is the nature of sensitive persons to transfer their own dispositions to those they love, and to expect a full reciprocation of them, it is their nature too, as a matter of consequence, to feel the most poignant anguish if their own extravagant and unreasonable ardour is not suitably returned; and this pain is violent in proportion to the excess of their expectations and the magnitude of their disappointment.—In conformity to this doctrine, our great poet raises the resentment, the disappointment, and the pain of Lear to an excessive degree of poignancy and exasperation; and on his hearing the ungracious answer of Cordelia, which is so

Digitized by Google

entirely the reverse of what he expected, that, sensitive and hasty as he is, he can scarcely bring himself to believe it till it is repeatedly confirmed by her reiterated avowal. Then he breaks forth like a volcano, and, yielding to the impulse of his rage, disclaims all future connexion with her.

> By the sacred radiance of the sun,
> The mysteries of Hecate and the night;
> By all the operations of the orbs,
> From whom we do exist, and cease to be;
> Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
> Propinquity and property of blood,
> And as a stranger to my heart and me
> Hold thee from this, for ever.

Still, like the reflux of the sea, the excessive fondness which engendered this anger rolls back upon his heart for a moment; but only to render his fury the more ungovernable:

> I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
> On her kind nursery.—Hence, and avoid my sight!
> So be my grave my peace, as here I give
> Her father's heart from her!
> Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.

As one of the strongest arguments used in favour of Tate's alteration is, that a person so entirely faultless as Cordelia ought not to suffer, (a notion directly contradictory to the best received opinions respecting the privileges of tragedy) the character of Cordelia is, for the very purpose of the argument, greatly exaggerated. Now the truth is, that the answer of Cordelia, considering the august relations of the person to whom she speaks, his age and his infirmities, is coarse—blunt if you will—sincere too, if a rough avowal of disagreeable truth, without any adequate cause, be sincerity—but in her circumstances rough, saucy, churlish, undutiful, and blamable, because useless, unfounded, and unnecessary. Shakspeare, whose justice those self-fond critics impeach for the destiny he allots to Cordelia, has given her firm virtue enough to make the death to which he brings her lamented; but yet he has made her not so faultless as to be an unfit object for the sad catastrophe, to which the tragic muse delights to bring the virtuous as well as the wicked. Not only she chops logic, and with cold-blooded cynical bluntness, palters with the foolish fondness of the most tender of fathers, in a moment of the most extreme sensibi-

Digitized by Google

lity, but resolutely refuses to indulge him with an avowal of her love for him, which, if she did not even feel, it would have been virtue in her to affect: on the contrary, though she sees him agitated at her answer, she persists in it with stubborn, churlish pertinacity. Let it be remembered also, that to this her unpardonable obstinacy the misfortunes of her father, herself and her family are in a considerable degree to be ascribed. Away with that miserable casuistry, falsely called criticism, in which the wayward self-willed mind, more intent to plume itself on nice intellectual discriminations than to investigate the human passions and feelings, rejects the counsels of the heart, and listens only to the miserable dogmas of a brain perverted perhaps by ill directed study, or corrupted by metaphysics!—The judgment that takes its impulse from the united streams of a clear head, and a pure and feeling heart, will join with us in thinking that a dutiful and deserving daughter would have acted very differently from Cordelia—even by a pious deception poured balm into his aged heart, and

> On the last verge of life, watch ev'ry look,
> Explore each fond, unutterable wish,
> And smooth the pillow of declining age.

That Shakspeare intended to fix a slight stain upon Cordelia is certain; and it is no less obvious that he meant that this excellent moral lesson should be deduced from it—that to sport with, to exasperate, or to injure the feelings of parents, when it is in our power to assuage and give them happiness, deserves and brings down sooner or later a heavy judgment on the offender.—Mr. Colman, in his alteration, seems to have had no conception of this: for though, like Mr. Tate, he resolved to frustrate Shakspeare's purpose, he retains the offensive speeches of Cordelia; while Tate, who saw that the one rather militated against the other, and evidently perceived the drift of the great author, softens the language of Cordelia, out of compliment to his own plan of making her happy in the end, contrary to Shakspeare's appointment.

Let us be distinctly understood. When we blame the churlishness of Cordelia to her kind old father, it is not as a dramatic but as a moral character; and that which is a flaw in her as one, is a perfection in her as the other: for in this lies the error of too many critics—they confound the two kinds of characters, which are, in truth, perfectly distinct. He that draws a picture of man, if

Digitized by Google

he pretend to make it a resemblance, must give it man's vices and infirmities, as well as his virtues and beauties, and exhibit both in the various degrees of intermixture in which they are found in life. So Shakspeare has done; and in such sort, too, that he who attempts to alter or censure his general drawings, proves himself "most "egregiously an ass."—Thus for the general purpose of his play, Shakspeare has made Cordelia faulty, in her flippant obstinacy to her father; but has made her a mere woman in her feelings towards her sisters—against whom she lets loose her jealousy, even before there is any reason to imagine them recreant; showing thereby that her uncourteous words to her father, arose from a design to throw their professions of love into disadvantageous contrast with her own sincerity, rather than from any substantial valuable object she could have in view.

> I yet beseech your majesty
> (If, for I want that *glib and oily art*
> *To speak and purpose not;* since what I well intend,
> I'll do't before I speak) that you may know
> It is no vitious blot, murder or foulness,
> No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
> That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour:
> A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
> That I am glad I have not—though not to have it
> Hath lost me your liking.

Now, if Shakspeare meant all these insinuations and innuendoes, and her sturdy defiance of her father, for any other thing but to mark Cordelia's rooted jealousy and hatred of her sisters, who have not yet unfolded their baseness, he knew nothing of the movements of the heart, nor of the import of language. But to put it out of doubt at once, when France says to her "bid farewel to your sisters," the words our poet puts into Cordelia's mouth prove what we assert: addressing herself to her sisters, (who, we repeat it, have not yet proved recreant) she addresses them in very provoking terms,

> The *jewels of our father*, with wash'd eyes,
> Cordelia leaves you:—*I know what you are.*

From these ebullitions of jealousy and dislike in Cordelia who, after all, is angelic compared with her sisters, it is evident that the poet intended to show that the unhappy want of system, occasioned by the blind fondness and sensibility of old Lear, had early deposited in his family the seeds of animosity, selfishness, and mutual

Digitized by Google

jealousy; and that, however it might be concealed from the old king's observation, the goddess of discord had bowled her golden apple among them—for the sturdiness of Cordelia is chiefly aimed at her sisters. All are, therefore, in some degree, reprehensible—some extremely bad;—Cordelia has the advantage of appearing very amiable only by being contrasted with those monsters, her sisters,—and of redeeming herself by after acts of filial piety to her poor old father—administered however too late to effectuate any good purpose.

It has been the habit of critics, too, to rail at the poor old king. According to them, he is rash, cruel, capricious, inconstant, irresolute, and inordinately vindictive: but the reader, who follows him through the tragedy, will find that, in every part of his conduct, he acts in a manner conformable to the general nature of man when exposed to the same untoward circumstances; and that, if he were other than the poet has made him, he would be less natural, and therefore inferior as a dramatic personage. Here, indeed, the critic's theory is at variance with the universal feeling;—for we verily believe that, from the outset of the play to the end of it, Lear is to every heart an object of unqualified regard, and of a compassion almost filial. That person, male or female, who does not feel for the old monarch something analogous to the tenderness and sorrow of a child, and the most violent indignation and horror of his enemies, must be destitute of sympathy, and devoid of every laudable sentiment. All his errors spring from amiable qualities carried to excess,—his imprudence from overweening parental affection, misplaced generosity and unsuspecting confidence;—his apparent vindictiveness, from ill requited love and the base ingratitude of those to whom he gave his all;—his rashness from the incapacity of infirmity and extreme age to struggle with feelings and to endure wrongs, such as would be an overmatch for firm men in the vigorous bloom of manhood, and might indeed have ruffled stoicism itself. On the other hand, he discloses the most benevolent dispositions, unmixed with selfishness or deceit. Though furious, his anger is sudden, spontaneous, unpremeditated, and untainted with malice or ill nature; and his worst faults, far from being of a criminal dye, are the offspring of innocence and simplicity. As if intent upon collecting his whole might into one great effort to storm the heart and to display his unlimited mastery over our feelings, Shakspeare has summed up in Lear every circumstance

Digitized by Google

that can excite our interest for his welfare, and wring the heart with the most painful sympathies. He has not only made him very old and burdened him with the feebleness and infirmities annexed to age, but made him announce it himself:

'Tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from *our age*;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd *crawl toward death;*—

and again in the seventh scene of the fourth act,

Pray do not mock me:
I am a very *foolish, fond old man,*
Fourscore and upwards,—

and, to finish the portrait, he has made him the victim of his own kindness to ungrateful, undutiful, and unnatural children. Here is a picture to which as there never yet was, so it is very probable that time itself will never find a fellow.

The same sensibility which kindles his wrath against Cordelia, renders him impatient of opposition, and indignant at the generous interposition and blunt advice of the honest old Kent, whose language, though rather rough to be offered to his sovereign, extorts our approbation by its truth and boldness, and delights every good heart by its hazardous sincerity.

Kent. Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd—
Lear. The bow is bent and drawn, make firm the shaft.
Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour-bound
When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom;
And, in thy best consideration, check
This hideous business: answer my life, my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.——Revoke thy gift,
Or, while I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

This is noble—this is natural; and while it unfolds the character of KENT, forms a cause for his dismissal from the king's service, and

Digitized by Google

enables the poet, without any breach of order or probability, to introduce him soon after in the interesting disguise of the old serving man Caius. It is worthy of observation that Shakspeare seldomer than any other poet takes aim at a single object—and that very often a sentence, or even a single line of his, will convey two distinct ideas, sometimes even more. In the ungovernable anger of Lear, still further inflamed by the interference and censure of Kent, an ordinary poet would have thought that the least Lear should do, being prevented from putting him to death with his own sword on the spot, would be to order him to instant execution; but Shakspeare has further use for Kent, and not only resolves that he shall live, but makes the very punishment ordained him, instrumental to a further illustration of the character of the old king. Across the whirlwind of Lear's rage therefore there breaks a flash of recollection of Kent's former fidelity and services—a throb of remaining regard, which pleads in his behalf; and the king contents himself with banishing him.

> Five days we do allot thee for provision
> To shield thee from disaster of the world,
> And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
> Upon our kingdom. If on the tenth day following,
> Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
> That moment is thy death.

Having dismissed Kent, Lear then turns to Burgundy, and, carrying his indignation to a degree of vindictiveness, for which we cannot help making allowance, considering the inflamed state of his temper, and the infirm unsettled condition of his mind, and which cannot be deemed unnatural, since the experiment of every passing year furnishes so many instances of the kind even in inferior life, he tells that prince, who has been Cordelia's suiter, that he may have her, provided he will take her without any other dowry than his abhorrence:

> Now her price is fallen: sir, there she stands;
> If aught within that little seeming substance,
> Or all of it, with our displeasure pierc'd,
> And nothing more may fitly like your grace,
> She's there, and she is yours ——
> Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
> Unfriended, new adopted to our hate,
> Dower'd with our curse and stranger'd with our oath,
> Take her, or leave her?

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

THE following letter, received per New York, appears to the editor of the Mirror to be of too *imperative* a nature to be postponed to another number: our observations on King Lear are therefore cut short for the purpose of giving it a place in this.

MR. EDITOR,

A friend to your Dramatic Censor makes bold to address you upon the merits of that work, and hopes that his advice may have some weight. To the work in question, he has been a subscriber from its commencement; and upon that consideration, he considers it a right, which he holds in common with others, to offer any remarks he may think proper, provided they do not interfere with the private character of the editor.

The first subject we shall notice is a communication signed "Gum," which appeared in a former volume of the work in question; in which the writer displays a total ignorance of the characters which he attempts to delineate. To none of *our* performers does he attach any credit. Simpson, who is *a far greater favourite with us, than Wood is with you*, he says is not above mediocrity; Mrs. Mason, *a better actress than whom never trod the American boards*, is *almost* passed over in silence! and Twaits—yes Twaits, the darling of the American people, is spoken of as but a trifling actor. This, sir, is not the way to obtain the patronage of the citizens of the *United States*. If you mean your work for the Philadelphians, it is well; but if you expect *general* support—give *general* satisfaction. If you can give *our city* no biographical sketches of its performers, I pray you, do not suffer your correspondents to hurl their malice at them; rather let them sleep in silence, than make them noted only by slander.

Of the Boston and Charleston performers you say *nothing:* and, if I mistake not, it was one of the conditions of the work, to give criticisms upon the *American* stage (not the Philadelphian *only*). I have said sufficient; and what I have said, has not been for myself alone, but for *others* who have patronized your work. If there is no other redress, then they must unwillingly withdraw that support, which by giving, they hoped to create a work, which might be both a pleasure to themselves, and an honour to their country.

New-York, June 1811. WESTON.

P.S. *I can hardly hope that you will have the candour to publish the above.* If you will (and any remarks you may think proper to add) I shall consider myself greatly OBLIGATED to you. W.

Digitized by Google

The promptitude with which we have given a place to the above letter, must convince the writer that we have no desire to withhold it from the public eye. Why WESTON should call in question our having candour enough to publish it, we are not at all solicitous to know, nor shall we take the trouble to inquire: we may be permitted, however, to compliment that gentleman upon the singular liberality of his suggestion: with candour of that kind, such suspicions as his are very naturally associated. After such an insinuation, who could have blamed us, if we had treated the communication with neglect? Indeed we should have done so, were it not that, instead of shrinking from the subject, we are glad of an occasion to bring it before the public.

To Weston's charge the answer is short and easy. At an early period of this work, the then proprietor of it, being on business at New-York, applied to a person there, in whose judgment he thought he could confide, to furnish the Mirror with occasional communications touching the theatre of that city. With the engagement, whatever it was, the EDITOR of the Mirror had no privity—he barely understood who the person employed was; and he had reason to believe him capable of the office. Soon afterwards, the communication signed GLUM (not Gum) was by the proprietor handed over, most probably without being read, to the editor, with other papers, for insertion, and was by the latter immediately put into the printer's hands.

At this distance of time, the editor has but an obscure recollection what the precise impression made upon him by that communication was; but from a review of the piece, taken since the arrival of Weston's letter, he is sure it could not have been favourable; and he remembers very well having united with Mr. Inskeep, of New-York, (who soon after its appearance came on a visit to Philadelphia) in censuring it, and lamenting its having been published. The editor of the Mirror is persuaded that he either did not peruse, or but very slightly glanced at, the writing, before it was printed: for had he noticed the tendency of *some of its parts*, he would have taken the freedom to state his opinion of it to the proprietor.—To have altered or rejected it himself, had he noticed it, would have been inadmissible, indelicate, and a violation of the etiquette which ought to subsist among writers.

Weston, however, must not infer from this, that the parts of Glum's observations, which have offended him, are those which

Digitized by Google

the editor would have thought reprehensible. From the nature of his office, the New-York critic was intitled to that confidence without which it would be fruitless to employ him; and it would be preposterous to suspect such a one of any hostile intentions to actors just arrived, for the first time, in the country: nor would it be less preposterous in the editor of the Mirror to call in question the correctness of Glum's observations on Mr. Simpson, Mrs. Mason, or Mr. Twaits, since he not only had never seen, but to this very moment has never set his eyes upon either of the two former; and since, of Mr. Twaits he never saw enough *on the stage* to enable him to form an adequate judgment of his professional talents. The editor has as yet seen that gentleman in but two characters. In one of those he greatly admired him; but that was low comedy—and in low comedy Glum has praised Mr. Twaits.

Of the really censurable part of the production, however, Weston says nothing. This, coupled with his laying such extraordinary stress on the other parts of it, which being a mere matter of opinion on actors, are certainly defensible, looks as if Weston had some particular cause for soreness on that point which the editor of the Mirror cannot possibly feel. Unnecessary comparisons between existing persons are never instituted but for bad purposes, and generally arise more from malice to the person lowered, than good will to him that is raised. Glum's injurious comparison between the managers of the New-York and Philadelphia theatre therefore has always had, and ever must have, our unequivocal disapprobation. Indeed so much, that, while free from any wilful concern in it, we should be glad to have it entirely expunged from the work.—But why has Weston overlooked that part?—His silence on it, and his at the same time fastening so angrily upon the wrongs supposed by him to be done to his favourite performers, is rather curious:—it reminds us of the story told in a curious old romance, of a giant who gulped down windmills with ease, but was afterwards choked in attempting to swallow a bit of butter, at the mouth of a hot oven.

Without following the example of Weston by glancing at a comparison between Mr. Simpson and Mr. Wood, we will say (and sincerely we do say it) that it gives us unfeigned pleasure to hear that the former is a favourite at New-York: it costs us no effort of faith to believe that he is deserving of it: we have, indeed, heard him spoken of by Mr. Wood with that liberal applause with which it becomes one gentleman to speak of another. But if Mr. Simpson

Digitized by Google

be indeed even as great a favourite in New-York, and on the same grounds, as Mr. Wood is in Philadelphia, his situation is truly enviable.

Could the editor of the Mirror but accomplish the brilliant *sæpe repetita* hypothesis of lawyer Dowling, in Tom Jones, and cut himself into four quarters, he would take care to be at one and the same time in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New-York and Boston; but since that kind of ubiquity is denied him, he must either go without any stage intelligence from those places, or take what he can procure "with all its imperfections on its head." To establish correspondents for the purpose has been an object of the proprietor's earnest solicitude; and, though as yet unsuccessful, he does not despair of speedily accomplishing it. But the election of a correspondent being once made, his criticism must be confided in, and appear unaltered in the work. In that case, the editor does not vouch for the orthodoxy of his opinion—he only gives it as the best he can get. For nothing in all empiricism can be imagined more arrogant or absurd than for an editor, who has not seen a performance, to censure the critique upon it of a correspondent who has; and such would have been our conduct (having never seen Mr. Simpson or Mrs. Mason) had we impeached the criticism of GLUM.

In cases of distant correspondents, the public, though they should dissent from the criticism, take no offence at the editor, because they know he is not reprehensible for the opinions of others:—were it not so, what an old house should he not now pull about his head by publishing Weston's encomium on Mrs. Mason, among a people who still remember that Mrs. WARREN *once trod the American boards*. If Weston will take the pains to look over the Monthly Mirror of London, he will find that the opinions of its country correspondents are frequently at variance with that of its city editors.—In the case of Cooke, there is a striking instance of this, where they publish a correspondent's dispraise of that actor, and declare at the same time, that they retain an opposite opinion in his favour.

Should the difficulty of procuring correspondents by epistolary application continue to be insuperable, the proprietor, or an agent for him, will go to the several cities in person for the purpose.—It is our interest to please all our subscribers if possible; and, whatever Weston may think to the contrary, it is sincerely our inclination also.

*** K. is received, and shall be published.

Digitized by Google

L. H 9/..

Digitized by Google

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

6 Aug 63 JC

REC'D LD

AUG 20 1963

JAN 5 1978

REC. CIR. JAN 23 '78

DEC 15 1979

REC. CIR. NOV 19 1979

NOV 24 1983 13

REC. CIR. MAY 24 '83

LD 21A–50m-11,'62
(D3279s10)476B

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

Digitized by Google